↘ Amplifying Change: Harnessing Collective Power to End Child Marriage

UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage

end child marriage

A voice. A chance. A future.

2023 ANNUAL RESULTS AND PHASE II (2020-2023) REPORT

⊙ Amplifying Change: Harnessing Collective Power to End Child Marriage

UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage

August 2024

Programme/project name	UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage
Donors	The Governments of Belgium, Canada, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, the European Union through the Spotlight Initiative, and Zonta International.
Contributions to the Global Programme in Phase II	UNICEF and UNFPA: EUR 8,000,000 from Belgium CAD 30,000,000 from Canada EUR 1,500,000 from Italy EUR 30,000,000 from the Netherlands NOK 296,700,000 from Norway US$ 4,641,000 from Zonta International GBP 18,000,000 from the United Kingdom EUR 637,502 from the European Commission EUR 7,194,000 from the European Union through the Spotlight Initiative US$ 500,000 from the United States of America
Global Programme funds used to date	Phase I UNICEF: US$ 51,421,765.47 as of 31 December 2019 UNFPA: US$ 32,413,294 as of 31 December 2019 Phase II UNICEF: US$ 59,606,438 from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2023 UNFPA: US$ 42,695,183 from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2023
Balance forwarded to 2023-2024	UNICEF: US$ 14,359,432 as of 31 December 2023 UNFPA: US$ 5,230,307 as of 31 December 2023
Duration of grants	UNICEF SC160258 pass-through: 15 March 2016 to 31 December 2030 UNFPA UCJ18 UNICEF to UNFPA: 15 March 2016 to 31 December 2030
Report type	Progress – Headquarters Regional offices of South Asia/Asia and the Pacific, West and Central Africa, Eastern and Southern Africa, and Middle East and North Africa/Arab States Country offices of Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Niger, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Uganda, Zambia, and Yemen
Reporting period	1 January 2020 to 31 December 2023
Report due date	31 May 2024
Report prepared on	31 May 2024
Relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets and UNICEF and UNFPA Strategic Plan priorities	SDG 5.3: Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation
	UNICEF Strategic Plan Outcome P6: Increased national capacity to provide access to child protection systems that prevent and respond to violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect Output P6.b.4 Countries (of those with child marriage prevalence is 25% or higher) with national strategies or plans on child marriage with a budget
	UNFPA Strategic Plan Output 6: Young people, in particular adolescent girls, have the skills and capabilities to make informed choices about their sexual and reproductive health and rights, and well-being Output 9: Strengthened policy, legal and accountability frameworks to advance gender equality and empower women and girls to exercise their reproductive rights and to be protected from violence and harmful practices. Output 12: Strengthened response to eliminate harmful practices, including child, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation, and son preference
Focus population	Adolescent girls at risk of and affected by child marriage Adolescent boys, families, traditional and religious leaders, community groups, and other influencers Sectoral systems and institutions (education, health, child protection, gender-based violence, social protection) Government and civil society organizations, regional and global institutions
Programme partners	In the 12 focus countries, the Global Programme works with governments at both national and subnational levels, regional bodies engaged in relevant initiatives, academic institutions, international and national non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, religious communities, faith-based organizations, the private sector, and the media
UNICEF contacts	Sheema Sen Gupta, Director Child Protection, Programme Group, ssengupta@unicef.org, tel. +1 (845) 790 2641 Joseph Mabirizi, Acting Coordinator, UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage, Child Protection Team, Programme Group, jmabirizi@unicef.org, tel. +1 (929) 452 7207
UNFPA Contacts	Leyla Sharafi, Chief, Gender, Human Rights and Inclusion Branch, Programme Division, sharafi@unfpa.org Jose-Roberto Luna, Programme Advisor, Ending Child Marriage, Gender, Human Rights, and Inclusion Branch, Programme Division, jluna@unfpa.org, +1. 646.918.4176

Contents

List of tables

List of figures

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AU	African Union
CEFM	Child, early, and forced marriage
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CRANK	Child Marriage Research to Action Network
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
Global Programme	UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage
GTA	Gender-Transformative Approaches
ICDP	International Child Development Programme
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
SAIEVAC	South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
STAR	Strategic Technical Assistance for Research
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage (the Global Programme; also referred to in this report as 'the Programme'), a 15-year programme (2016–2030), aims to accelerate action to end child marriage in alignment with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 5.3. The Global Programme targets adolescent girls (ages 10–19) at risk of child marriage or already in union in 12 focus countries with a high prevalence or high burden of child marriage: Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Yemen and Zambia.[1]

The programme promotes the rights of adolescent girls to avert child marriage and prevent adolescent pregnancy, empowering them to pursue their aspirations through life skills, comprehensive sexuality education, access to, return to and retention in education, and creating alternative pathways. The Global Programme fosters attitude changes within households and communities and strengthens services like sexual and reproductive health and social protection. It advocates for laws and policies protecting adolescent girls' rights, emphasizing the use of robust data and evidence for policy formulation and implementation.

The Global Programme's steadfast focus on prioritizing girls has resulted in impactful programming and learning that extends well beyond the field of child marriage, positively influencing areas such as education, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and adolescent development. The programme has also served as an incubator and example of UN system-led joint initiatives that put girls and women at the centre, not just in advocacy but in concrete programming.

TRENDS IN CHILD MARRIAGE AND PROGRAMMING CONTEXT

Global context: Recent years have witnessed escalating insecurity and humanitarian crises worldwide, driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and renewed conflicts (Ukraine, Sahel, Middle East, Horn of Africa, etc.). The polycrisis and megatrends have inflicted significant suffering on affected populations and triggered extensive economic effects globally.[2] [3]

1   UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage, Phase III Summary Narrative, 2023, www.unicef.org/media/143861/file/Phase-III-Summary.pdf

2   UNICEF, Prospects for Children in the Polycrisis. A 2023 Global Outlook, 2023, www.unicef.org/innocenti/reports/prospects-children-polycrisis-2023-global-outlookhttps://www.unicef.org/innocenti/reports/prospects-children-polycrisis-2023-global-outlook

3   United Nations, Report of the UN Economist Network for the UN 75th Anniversary Shaping the Trends of Our Time, 2020, www.un.org/en/desa/unen/report

Child marriage trends: Over the past decade, the global prevalence of child marriage has decreased from 23 per cent to 19 per cent. While South Asia has seen a steady decline, progress in other regions, such as Latin America and the Caribbean, has been slower or even stagnant. To eliminate child marriage by 2030, global progress needs to accelerate 20 times. At the current rate, it would take 300 years to end child marriage. As child marriage rates decline more slowly in sub-Saharan Africa, and demographic growth concentrates there, this region's share of the child marriage burden is expected to increase. Worldwide, adolescent girls from poorest households are at the highest risk and girls from the richest households account for three times as many of the averted cases of child marriage.[4] Global data show that the majority of first births to girls aged 17 years and younger, in 54 developing countries with data, occur within marriage or cohabiting unions.[5]

Challenges ahead: Persistent crises, including public health emergencies, conflicts and natural disasters, heighten risks for adolescent girls, disrupting education and causing economic hardships. The COVID-19 pandemic alone was projected to result in an additional 10 million child marriages by 2030.[6] Increases in conflict-related deaths and climate shocks significantly elevate the risk of child marriage due to increased insecurity, threats of sexual violence, infrastructure breakdowns, food insecurity, and economic pressures. These challenges, compounded by global megatrends such as migration, ageing, urbanization and technological advances, lead to intersecting forms of exclusion and discrimination affecting adolescent girls.[7][8]

© UNICEF/UNO794812/Dejongh

4   UNICEF, Is an End to Child Marriage Within Reach? Latest trends and future prospects, May 2023 update, https://data. unicef.org/resources/is-an-end-to-child-marriage-within-reach/

5   UNFPA, Motherhood in Childhood: The Untold Story, 2022, www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/

6   UNICEF, 10 million additional girls at risk of child marriage due to COVID-19, 2021, www.unicef.org/press-releases/10-million-additional-girls-risk-child-marriage-due-covid-19

7   Girls Not Brides, UNFPA, UNICEF, CRANK Research Spotlight: Addressing child marriage and supporting married girls in conflict- and crisis-affected settings, 2023, www.girlsnotbrides.org/learning-resources/resource-centre/crank-research-spotlight-child-marriage-conflict-crisis-settings/

8   UNFPA, Interwoven Lives, Threads of Hope, State of World Population Report 2024, https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/swp2024-english-240327-web.pdf

2023 ACHIEVEMENTS

© UNICEF/UNI577979/Halder; © UNICEF/UN0291825/Dejongh; © UNICEF/UN0787124/Fathi; © UNICEF/UNI550168/Franco

Supported the most marginalized and vulnerable adolescent girls to prevent child marriage. In 2023, the Programme empowered 7.1 million vulnerable adolescent girls with life skills and comprehensive sexuality education. Close to 2.5 million vulnerable girls were also supported to enrol in, return to, or remain in school. Current programme data demonstrate a positive trend towards increases in SRHR knowledge (35.7% in 2019 to 78.8% in 2023), girls' agency (37.7% in 2019 to 65% in 2023), and a reduction in school drop-out among adolescent girls (30.7% in 2019 to 9.7% in 2023) in the Global Programme focus countries.

Implemented an ambitious and long-term gender-transformative approach to address the root causes of gender inequality across countries, regions and partners. The Global Programme developed a Gender-Transformative Accelerator Tool to facilitate programmatic reflection and action planning to end child marriage.[9] In 2023, country offices implemented the tool across six domains: adolescent girls' skills, agency and empowerment; addressing masculinities and engaging men and boys; family and community mobilization; gender norms and stereotypes; systems and services; and policy and structural change through institutional partnerships.[10] In the process, the programme engaged over 14 million community members in dialogues and consensus-building on gender equality and alternatives to child marriage. The Global Programme's gender-transformative approaches (GTAs) have enhanced the engagement of men and boys, encouraged critical reflection on gender power dynamics, and amplified the focus on positive masculinities.[11] As a result of the programme, over 6.4 million boys and men engaged in programmes that foster healthy relationships and promote positive masculinities.[12]

Invested in strengthening social and gender norms and behaviour change programming to address the drivers of child marriage. In 2023, the Global Programme launched a series of capacity-building and reflective activities to address the root causes of gender inequality and transform harmful social roles, norms and power relations among staff and partners. The Programme engaged over 1.6 million local gatekeepers, including traditional, religious and community leaders, in dialogues and consensus-building to end child marriage. The Programme also reached over 135 million people through media with key messages about child marriage, girls' rights, and gender equality. Current programme data show a decline in the social pressure on parents to marry off their daughters, from 52.9 per cent in 2019 to 42.9 per cent in 2023. There has also been an increase in recognition of positive rewards associated with the abandonment of child marriage, from 44 per cent in 2019 to 63.5 per cent in 2023. Most importantly, parents who believe that girls should make the final decision on whether to marry has increased from 8 per cent in 2019 to 49.8 per cent in 2023.

---

10 UNFPA and UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage, Gender-Transformative Accelerator Tool. Workshop Facilitation Guide, 2021, www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/GTA%20Tool%20Guide-2021-EN_0.pdf

11 Lauren Rumble, Suzanne Patroni and Ruth Graham Goulder, 'Early learnings from UNICEF's work to employ gender transformative approaches to advance adolescent girls' rights', *Child Protection and Practice*, Vol. 2, 2024

12 Equimundo and UNFPA, 2022, Boyhood and child, early, and forced marriages and unions, https://www.equimundo.org/resources/boyhood-and-child-early-and-forced-marriages-and-unions-an-evidence-review/

© UNICEF/UNI490036/Paniwani

Enhancing sustainability of interventions by building resilient systems and expanding partnerships. In Phase II, the Global Programme prioritized the strengthening of multisectoral systems and services (health, education, GBV and protection) and supported 20,565 service delivery points to provide quality services for adolescent girls at risk of or affected by child marriage.

Supported advocacy efforts that accelerate governments action towards ending child marriage. Advocacy and technical support from the Global Programme and partners has led to government financing of national action plans to end child marriage in 8 out of the 12 Global Programme focus countries. Global advocacy efforts have increased the number of countries with such plans from 7 in 2018 to 33 in 2023.[13] Countries in East and Southern Africa developed budget briefs to influence public financial decision-making processes and leverage domestic resources for children.[14]

Expanded investments in research and mechanisms for high-quality evidence generation and uptake. In 2023, the Global Programme produced 31 research and evidence products, all aimed at fostering evidence-based programming and policies to end child marriage with quality assurance through the STAR Initiative in partnership with UNICEF Innocenti – Global Office of Research and Foresight. The Programme's contribution to the analysis, synthesis and systematic reviews of global evidence on effective interventions was complemented by the launch of of a dedicated child marriage data portal through

the Child Marriage Monitoring Mechanism. In collaboration with Girls Not Brides, the Global Programme held four CRANK research meetings for policymakers and practitioners, fostering a deeper understanding of the evidence available across regions that promoted uptake. Twelve regional convenings were also held to share the most recent evidence. The key findings and recommendations were synthesized into concise evidence briefs. The Global Programme also published three journal articles. These initiatives significantly enhanced the use of contextualized evidence on effective strategies to end child marriage.

Expanded strategic partnerships to increase and accelerate impact on vulnerable adolescent girls and their communities. In 2023, the Global Programme formed 454 partnerships with government entities, private sector institutions and local self-help groups. The collaborations helped strengthen social protection and promote girls' economic empowerment. Through these strategic alliances and programme referrals, the Programme was able to extend social protection services to over 6.3 million adolescent girls, leading to improved educational attainment and reduced adolescent birth rates. In countries where the Global Programme has successfully leveraged social protection services, the transition rate for girls in schools has risen from 56.8 per cent in 2019 to 69.2 per cent today. With regards to adolescent birth rates, data from the Global Programme countries programme areas show a drop from an average 52 per 1000 to 36 per 1000.

---

13   Source: Global Programme records.

14   UNICEF, ESAR budget briefs: https://www.unicef.org/esa/reports/budget-briefs

PHASE II (2020- 2023) KEY RESULTS

Reached more than 20 million girls with life skills and comprehensive sexuality education.

Supported 2.9 million girls to enrol in, return to, or remain in school.

Engaged 66 million community members in dialogues and consensus-building on gender equality and alternatives to child marriage.

Supported more than 20,500 service delivery points to provide quality health, education, and protection and GBV services for adolescent girls.

Produced 94 quality research and evidence products on ending child marriage at the country, regional and global levels.

Advocacy and technical support has led to government financing of national action plans to end child marriage in 8 out of the 12 Global Programme countries. Global advocacy efforts have increased the number of countries with such plans from 7 in 2018 to 33 in 2023.

Advocacy and technical support have led to the drafting, proposal or adoption of 118 policies and legal instruments that address child marriage following international human rights standards.

Established 906 partnerships to support social protection and girls' economic empowerment.

PHASE II (2020- 2023) KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Advanced gender-transformative programming: This approach aims to address the root causes of gender inequality by transforming harmful gender roles, norms, and power dynamics. In Phase II, the Global Programme developed a set of technical notes and innovated with the creation of the Gender-Transformative Accelerator Tool, which has been implemented in 11 out of the 12 Global Programme countries, along with 7 others.[15] Countries use the tool to assess how they address the unequal distribution of resources between genders, allocate roles and responsibilities among different genders and identities, and understand how power dynamics contribute to privilege and status disparities. As a result of this process, national action plans for acceleration have been developed and implemented across six key domains: girls' skills, agency, and empowerment; men and boys' engagement and positive masculinities; family and community mobilization; gender norms and stereotypes; systems and services strengthening; and policy and structural change through partnerships. To ensure that action through engagement with CSOs is rooted at the local level and enhances the potential for significant

---

15 Egypt, Jordan, Mauritania, Nigeria, Palestine, Senegal, Tanzania.

< continued

societal transformation, the Global Programme conducted a qualitative assessment involving 134 grass-roots women- and youth-led organizations and identified opportunities for improving their gender-transformative approaches. The Global Programme then partnered with Girls Not Brides to adapt the Gender-Transformative Accelerator Tool into a 7-step guide for CSOs[16], and implemented the guide with 17 CSO coalitions in Ghana, Nigeria and Mozambique to enhance their capacities in gender-transformative skills, knowledge and leadership to systematically analyse and address the root causes of gender inequality, both at the individual and at systems level. In Mozambique, girls directly supported through the activities of the CSO coalitions have developed capacity to advocate against discriminatory norms and speak up for themselves.

Contributed to a gender-equitable family and community environment: Recognizing that social and gender norms and stereotypes play a crucial role in child marriage, the Global Programme has invested in strengthening social norms and behaviour change programming. The goal is to increase the adoption of targeted positive behaviours and practices in communities vulnerable to harmful practices. To achieve this, the Global Programme developed a social and behaviour change toolkit (referred to as the 'SBC Playbook'). This toolkit guides communities in generating insights about the specific social and behavioural factors driving harmful practices. By co-creating solutions, these communities work to eliminate these harmful norms. The SBC Playbook has been successfully tested in four countries: Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea Bissau and Nigeria. For instance, in Ghana, communities identified teenage pregnancy as a key driver of child marriage. To address this, they tackled community stigma and social norms by improving access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) centres. Additionally, providing adolescent girls with access to finance through village savings and loans associations helped reduce their financial constraints, contributing to the prevention of teenage pregnancy and child marriage. To ensure there is capacity for transformational change, over 200 government and CSO staff have been trained in-person, and 3,000 practitioners have received online training in social norms programming and measurement. The training package has also been converted into a series of short courses for postgraduate training of students and practitioners in collaboration with the University of Nairobi. Furthermore, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Uganda, Yemen and Zambia have been supported in conducting SBC household surveys.

Addressed child marriage in humanitarian settings: In Phase II, the Global Programme developed a Global Technical Guide on addressing child marriage in humanitarian settings.[17] This document provides guidance on how to prepare for and respond to child marriage in humanitarian settings, recognizing the current humanitarian architecture strategies as well as development context responses to preventing child marriage and mitigating its effects on girls. It also identifies how to improve synergies between actions taken in different settings, including at the humanitarian–development nexus. Furthermore, during the COVID pandemic the Global Programme supported the adaptation of programmes and interventions and documented the pivoting strategies used across countries.[18] As a result, child marriage programming

---

16 Girls Not Brides, 'How civil society organisations can use gender-transformative collective action to address child marriage and advance girls' rights: A 7-step guide', 2023.

17 UNFPA and UNICEF, Addressing Child Marriage in Humanitarian Settings: Technical guide for staff and partners of the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage, 2021, www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Child-marriage-humanitarian-settings-technical-guide-2021-v2.pdf

18 UNFPA, Adapting to COVID-19: Pivoting the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage to Respond to the Pandemic, 2020, www.unfpa.org/resources/adapting-covid-19-pivoting-unfpa%E2%80%93unicef-global-programme-end-child-marriage-respond

in humanitarian settings has been implemented in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nepal and Uganda.

Strengthened evidence and data availability and quality: The Global Programme worked to expand the availability and quality of data and evidence on child marriage, adolescent pregnancy, and the bodily autonomy of women and girls. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Global Programme swiftly documented and analysed its effects on child marriage and adolescent girls, adapting multisectoral programming accordingly. The Strategic Technical Assistance for Research (STAR) partnership has played a crucial role by providing research and analytical support to country and regional offices. This support includes evidence synthesis, identifying priority evidence gaps, and promoting evidence-based policymaking. As a result, there is now much greater clarity on effective strategies to end child marriage worldwide. In 2023, the Programme developed a synthesis paper outlining what works to prevent and respond to child marriage. This builds on the 2021 publication of a systematic review that examined evaluations from 2000 to 2019 on what works to prevent child marriage in low and middle-income countries. The review consistently found that enhancing girls' own human capital and opportunities was the most compelling pathway to delaying marriage. It recommended orienting programming to prevent child marriage based on this evidence. The generated evidence informed the design of Phase III (2024–2030) of the Global Programme. In 2023, the Global Programme produced 20 research and evidence products that shed light on effective interventions and areas where efforts fall short. The Programme's contribution to the analysis and synthesis of global evidence on effective interventions was marked by the launch of a dedicated child marriage data portal. In addition, the collaboration with the World Health Organization resulted in a systematic review of the latest evidence on effective interventions to prevent adolescent pregnancy and child marriage, contributing to the Global Programme's priority of addressing the evidence gap on the interlinkages between adolescent pregnancy and child marriage prevention. In partnership with Girls Not Brides through the Child Marriage Research to Action Network (CRANK), the Global Programme has been translating the key findings and recommendations into concise evidence briefs for practitioners. These initiatives significantly enhanced the use of contextualized evidence on effective strategies to end child marriage.

Coordinating learning and evidence uptake: Through collaboration with partners, global and regional networks, the Global Programme significantly increased access and sharing of contextualized evidence to support efforts to end child marriage. The CRANK, established in partnership with Girls Not Brides, has provided a platform for a better coordinated global research agenda, disseminated quarterly a total of 125 publications with the latest evidence on child marriage priority topics since its inception in 2021, and encouraged the uptake of evidence among more than 600 subscribed practitioners and policymakers. The external evaluation shows that the CRANK is effectively serving its core objective to disseminate evidence on child marriage priority topics and deepening many stakeholders' understanding of child marriage evidence, solutions, and emerging priorities. The Global Programme also promotes cross-learning through regional convenings, with key findings and recommendations synthesized into concise evidence briefs.

PROGRAMME CHALLENGES:

Efforts to end child marriage face several obstacles:

- **Pushback against gender equality and human rights**: Resistance to gender equality and children's rights slows progress, particularly in countries like Bangladesh, Ghana, India, Uganda, Yemen and Zambia.
- **Data sensitivities**: Despite significant investments, the lack of disaggregated data persists. In South Asia, available data often don't provide detailed information at the individual or community level, making it challenging to understand the nuance and variations within the areas.
- **Legislative and policy delays**: Slow progress on adoption and implementation of laws and policies related to child marriage and gender equality hampers multisectoral coordination efforts.
- **Public finance constraints**: Most countries struggle to adequately fund public services and programmes to end child marriage.
- **Scaling up challenges**: Limited fiscal space for public financing and insufficient funding for human resources hinders programme expansion at the national and subnational levels.
- **Humanitarian emergencies**: Protracted conflicts prioritize lifesaving interventions, and the lack of recognition of the harmful effects of child marriage makes hard to advocate for integrating child marriage as a lifesaving strategy, which leads to severe social, health and economic consequences for girls.
- **Limited economic opportunities**: Despite efforts by the Programme in providing vocational training and formal education to vulnerable girls, limited economic and job opportunities for girls persist across countries.
- **Digital divide**: Digital divides persist along the axes rural-urban, rich-poor, and educated-less educated, as well as between genders, with barriers including poor digital literacy and inequalities in access.

PROGRAMME LESSONS LEARNED:

- Phase II demonstrated the relevance of reaching the most at-risk girls through empowerment programmes. Specific tools and intentional approaches are needed to ensure that the Programme leaves no one behind. Broad-scale efforts don't necessarily reach the most marginalized individuals, and implementing focused and targeted interventions at the village level can be more effective in doing this. This strategy is enhanced by ensuring engagement at the household and family level.
- Gender-transformative programming requires a long-term investment. The Global Programme created the Gender-Transformative Accelerator Tool to operationalize gender-transformative approaches in Phase II, along with several technical tools and training. Phase II has shown that long-term investments are needed to ensure positive change due to the complexity of challenging deeply entrenched gender discrimination, social and gender norms and stereotyping present at all levels, from structural to interpersonal levels, including addressing the values and internal biases of the staff and implementing partners.
- Contextualization contributes to ownership and relevance in programming. Contextualizing the global theory of change, and developing context-specific national action plans to implement gender-transformative approaches has contributed to greater ownership, acceptability, and feasibility to accelerate the implementation of interventions.
- The framing of social and behavioural change interventions can greatly influence their success. An instrumental approach may yield better results than a purely normative one in some contexts.
- Child marriage laws as a stand-alone intervention are insufficient to end child marriage. Comprehensive legal reforms grounded in human rights standards are needed to prevent unintended negative consequences.
- Partnerships with feminist, women- and youth-led organizations have been crucial in supporting adolescent girls and facilitating community mobilization. However, these organizations, especially at the grass-roots level, are challenged by limited organizational capacity, including limited access to funding for institutional strengthening and sustainability.
- Continuous monitoring, evaluation and learning improves programming. Phase II has

demonstrated that it is crucial to enhance monitoring practices to systematically track the change across Global Programme areas.

PRIORITIES FOR THE WAY FORWARD:

Promoting gender equality and the empowerment of girls:

- Sustain and scale up intensive support interventions for adolescent girls' empowerment by implementing evidence-based and gender-transformative targeted life skills interventions and comprehensive sexuality education, particularly in non-formal settings.
- Contextualize social and behaviour change to promote gender-transformative change across all levels of the socio-ecological model rather than focusing only on individuals and the community level, to create an enabling environment for girls' empowerment.
- Strengthen work with boys and young men to promote positive masculinities, and make this work more systematic.
- Mobilize adolescent girls, women and young people as changemakers.
- Broaden partnerships for gender equality at global, regional and national levels.
- Build alliances with women- and youth-led organizations, networks and feminist movements, and strengthen their capacities in research, programming and advocacy to advance gender equality in national, regional and global forums

Adapting to the polycrisis and megatrends of the twenty-first century:

- Implement crisis-adaptive programming to ensure resilience and flexibility in response to changing circumstances. Establish rapid cycles of monitoring, evaluation, learning, and adaptation to continuously improve and adjust strategies based on outcomes and feedback.

Advancing the research and evidence agenda

- Foster an inclusive and participatory process for a Global South-led evidence agenda-setting process.
- Enhance skills and awareness regarding the 'what and how' of evidence uptake and dissemination.
- Promote ethical communication by increasing awareness of and response to macro-level political factors that affect the evidence ecosystem. Ensure careful communication of evidence to prevent misuse, particularly in the face of pushback.

© UNICEF/UNI548024/Zuniga

Table 1: Summary of output indicators performance for 2023 and Phase II (2020-2023)

Indicator	2023			PHASE II (2020-2023)		
	Target	Result	% Achieved	Target	Result	% Achieved
Indicator 1111: Number of adolescent girls (aged 10–19) who actively participated in life skills or comprehensive sexuality education interventions in programme areas	7,785,315	7,122,689	91%	21,323,301	20,127,571	94%
Indicator 1121: Number of girls (aged 10–19) supported by the Programme to enrol and/or remain in primary or secondary school	481,442	2,489,051	517%	1426,697	2,947,948	207%
Indicator 1211: Number of boys and men actively participating in group education/dialogues that address harmful masculinities and gender norms	5,305,013	6,808,349	128%	8,145,002	18,382,133	226%
Indicator 1221: Number of individuals (boys, girls, women and men) who participate in group education/dialogue sessions on consequences of and alternatives to child marriage, the rights of adolescent girls and gender equality	17,373,581	14,128,820	81%	51,662,776	66,685,134	129%
Indicator 1222: Number of individuals (boys, girls, women and men) reached by mass media (traditional and social media) messaging on child marriage, the rights of adolescent girls and gender equality	124,330,233	135,380,547	109%	287,509,091	399,024,857	139%
Indicator 1223: Number of local actors (e.g., traditional, religious and community leaders) with meaningful participation in dialogues and consensus-building to end child marriage	880,677	1,611,020	183%	1,142,479	2,793,129	244%
Indicator 1231: Number of civil society organizations newly mobilized in support of challenging social norms and promoting gender equality by the Global Programme (cumulative)	45	635	1411%	257	808	314%
Indicator 2121: Number of primary/secondary/ non-formal schools in programme areas providing quality gender-friendly education that meets minimum standards	2,828	2,402	85%	5,470	7,050	129%
Indicator 2131: Number of service delivery points in programme areas providing quality adolescent-responsive services (health, child protection/ gender-based violence) that meet minimum standards	7,452	5,518	74%	19,381	20,565	106
Indicator 2211: Number of partnerships (both formal and informal) established to deliver adolescent-responsive social protection, poverty reduction, and economic empowerment programmes and services (cumulative)	456	454	100%	585	906	155%
Indicator 3111: Number of policies or legal instruments addressing child marriage drafted, proposed or adopted at national and subnational level with Global Programme support (Cumulative)	9	24	266%	108	118	109%
Indicator 3121: Number of subnational plans with evidence-informed interventions to address child marriage (cumulative)	153	235	154%	153	235	154%
Indicator 3211: Number of generated evidence and knowledge that focus on what works to end child marriage (Cumulative)	20	31	155%	93	94	101%
Indicator 3212: Number of generated evidence and knowledge that apply a gender analysis (cumulative)	20	35	175%	92	99	108%
Indicator 3221: Number of South-to-South cooperation (conferences, expert visits, peer consultations, study tours, communities of practice) supported	23	52	226%	60	87	145%

CHAPTER 1:

RECENT TRENDS IN CHILD MARRIAGE

© UNICEF/UNI533733/Panjwani

1.1. Adolescent girls and child marriage: global situation

The 21st-century megatrends and polycrisis have significantly shaped the Global Programme's context. Conflicts, climate change, environmental disasters, humanitarian emergencies, rising inequality, poverty, and COVID-19's lingering effects risk the progress made in ending child marriage. The war in Ukraine started in 2022 led to a sharp spike in food and energy prices, unsettling global markets, escalating global hunger, and intensifying poverty – all risk factors for child marriage. These factors have also been the primary contributors to global inflation, triggering a steep rise in interest rates by the world's major central banks. This in turn has increased the dollar's value against other currencies, impeding low- and middle-income countries' access to external financing, increasing existing debt burdens and reducing the fiscal space available for gender equality investments.

The global pushback against gender equality and human rights hampers efforts to end child marriage. This includes resistance against legislation to ban child marriage and to raise the age of consent; a rise in legislation that criminalizes adolescent sexuality and hinders their autonomy and protection; opposition to the provision of contraception and other sexual and reproductive health services to adolescent girls; and resistance to the provision of comprehensive sexuality education to adolescents in and out of school, among other effects.

The decline in child marriage is much too slow to achieve the SDG target 5.3 of ending child marriage by 2030. While there has been a decline in the practice globally, progress would need to be 20 times faster than that observed in the last decade to ensure elimination by the end of this decade.[19] Moreover, progress to end child marriage is uneven among regions and has mainly benefited adolescent girls from the richer quintiles, highlighting the need to redouble efforts to reach the poorest, uneducated, rural and most vulnerable girls.[20]

Bodily autonomy and women's decision-making remain a challenge and hinder the progress of SDG target 5.6 aimed at ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights. Only 55 per cent of married or in-union women aged 15 to 49 make their own decisions regarding sexual and reproductive health and rights, based on data from 57 countries.[21] Data thus far reveal large disparities among regions, from less than 40 per cent empowered in Central Africa and West Africa to nearly 80 per cent in some countries in Europe, Southeast Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. In summary, gaps still exist in women's autonomy, even where high levels of individual decision-making are observed in some dimensions.

---

19 UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage, PHASE III Programme Document (2024–2030), 2023, www.unicef.org/media/145651/file/Programme%20document%20.pdf

20 Ibid.

21 UNFPA, Tracking women's decision-making for sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/20-033_SDG561-BrochureA4-v1.21.pdf

1.2. Recent trends in child marriage

Worldwide, 640 million girls and women alive today were married in childhood. South Asia accounts for nearly half of the global total number of child brides (45%), followed by sub-Saharan Africa (20%), East Asia and the Pacific (15%) and Latin America and the Caribbean (9%) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Global distribution of girls and women first married or in union before age 18, by region[22]

Sub-Saharan Africa
127 million

Latin America and the Carribean
58 million

Eastern Europe and Central Asia
20 million

South Asia
290 million

East Asia and the Pacific
95 million

Middle East and North Africa
37 million

Other regions
13 million
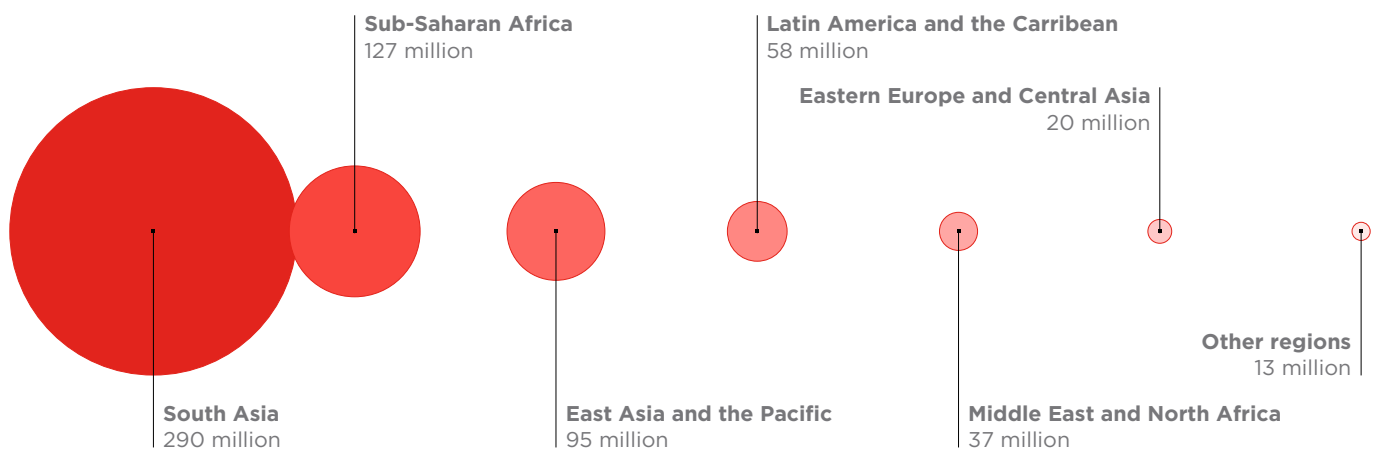
India alone accounts for one third of the world's child brides. Another third of the world's child brides are concentrated in ten countries (Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Nigeria, Brazil, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Mexico, Iran and Egypt),[23] with the final third of child brides distributed over 190 countries.

1.3. About the Global Programme

The UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage promotes the rights of adolescent girls, empowering them to avert child marriage and pregnancy and pursue their aspirations through life skills, comprehensive sexuality education, access to and retention in education and creating alternative pathways. The Global Programme fosters attitude changes within households and communities, and strengthens systems including sexual and reproductive health and social protection services. It advocates for laws and policies protecting girls' rights, emphasizing the use of robust data and evidence for policy formulation.

---

22 See Footnote 4. Figures do not add up to the total due to rounding.

23 This does not include China where the prevalence of child marriage is low, but – due to its population size – a large number of women are married before the age of 18. Suiqiong Fan, Yue Qian, Alissa Koski, 'Child marriage in mainland China', *Studies in Family Planning*, Vol. 53, No. 1, March 2022, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/sifp.12185.

1.4. About the Results Report

This document is a combined report for 2023 and for Phase II (2020–2023) as a whole. The report has four sections:

Chapter 1 Recent Trends in Child Marriage provides an overview of the global context and the latest child marriage trends and patterns, and the most recent evidence of what works to end child marriage.

Chapter 2 Global Programme Achievements presents an account of Programme achievements in relation to fostering of gender-transformative change, advocacy and influencing global and regional policy and advancing global research on child marriage.

Chapter 3 Programme Performance against the Results Framework presents key Global Programme results for 2023 and for Phase II (2020–2023) in the 12 focus countries in 4 regions. The results are organized by three intermediate and six immediate outcomes.

Chapter 4 Programme Governance and Management highlights achievements related to joint programming, partnerships, visibility and communication, knowledge management, impact beyond the core Global Programme countries, resource mobilization and expenditure, and value for money.

© UNICEF/UNI533256/Panjwani

CHAPTER 2:

GLOBAL PROGRAMME ACHIEVEMENTS

2.1. Advancing gender-transformative approaches

Since Phase II, the Global Programme has committed to advance gender-transformative programming to end child marriage. Gender-transformative approaches actively promote gender equality by creating conditions where women and girls have the freedom and capacity to make decisions about their own lives and have equal access to opportunities and resources. To achieve this transformational goal, the Global Programme uses a five-pronged strategy:

1 Development of technical and programmatic tools for country offices.
2 Capacity-building of staff and partners, knowledge management and cross-country learning.
3 Creation and roll-out of the Gender-Transformative Accelerator Tool, designed as a rapid gender assessment, prioritization, and action planning process.
4 In-depth technical assistance, both virtual and in the field.
5 Investment in and support to youth-led, women-led, or feminist civil society organizations.

A flagship innovation introduced by the Global Programme in partnership with Collective Impact in Phase II is the Gender-Transformative Accelerator Tool. This tool was developed to identify concrete actions for country programmes to become more gender transformative. The tool encourages critical reflection and awareness to understand how programmes are addressing the unequal distribution of resources between genders, to consider how roles and responsibilities are allocated between different genders and identities, and to assess how power secures higher status and privilege for some people. The tool has been implemented in 11 out of 12 Global Programme countries (all except Yemen)[24] and has led to national action plans for acceleration

in priority areas across its six domains as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Gender-Transformative Accelerator Tool and its domains
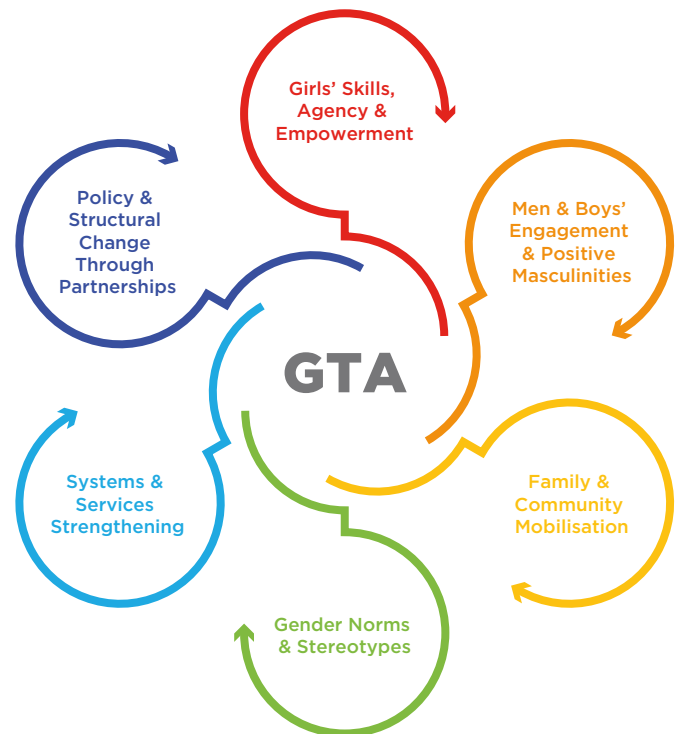
In India, the tool helped provide conceptual clarity in implementation, enhancing understanding of where and how a power structure manifests in inequalities and subjugates certain sections of the population – particularly marginalized adolescent girls, due to intersectional discrimination based on gender, age, class and caste. This has led to profound insights and strategies for dealing with restrictive gender norms, particularly those concerning control over the bodies of girls and women. As a result of the implementation of girl-centred programming **an adolescent girl from India who had stopped school for 2 years due to mobility restrictions said**: "*I always believed that what our parents are doing and thinking is the right thing*

---

24 UNFPA and UNICEF, A Synthesis Paper on The Gender-Transformative Accelerator, 2022, https://www.unicef.org/media/125016/file/GTA-2022-Synthesis-Report.pdf

© UNICEF/UNI583204/Prinsloo

for us. But today I realized that I must live my own life. I want to start studying where I left off. It is not true that there must be just one way, there can be many routes to decision-making."

In Ethiopia, the tool has supported the country offices to prioritize the strengthening of inclusive and gender-transformative social protection, education and health services to address the dual challenges of poverty and conflict, both of which are grounded in power dynamics and are crucial drivers of child marriage. One result of the process was that staff recognized the importance of strengthening the capacity of government workforces, in particular health, justice and social service providers, through approaches such as the social analysis and action approach that address values clarification and internal biases and gender stereotyping. The implementation of gender-transformative approaches effectively altered male views on the roles of women and girls in households. A revised life-skills manual for men and boys now includes sessions on positive masculinities, gender roles, power relations, and overcoming educational obstacles. These sessions have led male beneficiaries to rethink their previous attitudes, such as preferring to marry a

virgin and/or circumcised girl. Post-session, boys have started sharing household duties with female siblings and have become advocates against child marriage. **A 13-year-old participant noted**: "*I urged my parents not to rush my sister into marriage and to prioritize her education. I help with chores, giving her more time for academics, demonstrating that education opens doors to opportunities.*"

In Mozambique, the tool helped the country team and partners in analysing the need to address power dynamics in their social behaviour change communication strategies. This priority has enhanced their men and boys' engagement programming, promoted critical reflection on gender dynamics and emphasized positive masculinities. Mozambique has also revised its economic empowerment and entrepreneurship training tools to prevent the reinforcement of gender stereotypes. This includes avoiding the exclusive depiction of men as electricians or carpenters and women as nurses or social workers, thereby fostering a more equitable and inclusive gender representation.

In Ghana, the roll-out of the tool allowed country offices, the government and civil society partners

to analyse the challenges and opportunities to ensure the scalability and sustainability of the programmes for the empowerment of adolescent girls through systems and services, and the need to strengthen legislative frameworks as well as to promote positive masculinities and support coalition-building initiatives. The Global Programme has been implementing gender synchronous programming for adolescent girls and positive masculinities for boys. Training sessions were provided for boys in safe spaces on various topics including gender norms, sexual and reproductive health, and toxic masculinity. As a result, they began questioning traditional gender roles and stereotypes.

In Bangladesh, the country offices and partners have identified systems strengthening as a crucial step towards promoting gender-transformative approaches. This focus is particularly on adolescent-friendly health services and community-based child protection committees. In-depth analyses of the challenges and opportunities have enabled the country to recognize the importance of tool training as a key strategy. This strategy aims to enhance programme design and development with a gender-transformative approach, applicable in both developmental and humanitarian contexts.

In Phase II, the Global Programme developed six technical notes to support the operationalization of gender-transformative approaches. Two key enhancements were also made to the gender-transformative approaches toolkit:

1 the integration of <u>values clarification and attitudes transformation</u> – this was incorporated into the Gender-Transformative Accelerator Tool. It is helping Global Programme staff and partners to challenge internal bias, norms, and gender stereotyping, leading to more significant commitments for sustainable change at the country level.
2 the <u>qualitative indicators to measure gender-transformative change</u> – these indicators and an outcome monitoring tool will be part of the comprehensive Global Programme gender-transformative approaches toolkit.

The Gender-Transformative Accelerator Tool has expanded its reach to four additional countries beyond the Global Programme: Jordan, Nigeria,

Palestine and Tanzania. To ensure that action through engagement with CSOs is rooted at the local level and enhances the potential for significant societal transformation, the Global Programme conducted a qualitative assessment involving 134 grass-roots women- and youth-led organizations and identified opportunities for improving their gender-transformative approaches. The Global Programme then partnered with Girls Not Brides to adapt the Gender-Transformative Accelerator Tool into a 7-step guide for CSOs. Seventeen CSOs coalitions in Ghana, Nigeria and Mozambique had their capacities enhanced in gender-transformative skills, knowledge and leadership. This enabled them to systematically analyse and address the root causes of gender inequality, both at the individual and the systems level. In Mozambique, girls directly supported through the activities of the CSO coalitions have developed capacity to advocate against discriminatory norms and speak up for themselves. Additionally, 16 technical notes on child marriage were translated into Spanish in partnership with Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office to support the technical capacity of country offices and partners through technical assistance and knowledge management.

© UNICEF/UNI502081/Elfatih

© UNICEF/UNI520847/UNICEF Malawi

2.2. Grounded in human rights

In Phase II, the Global Programme continued its human rights-based approach across all interventions. This approach aimed to fulfil human rights related to development, protection, education, health (including SRHR), and a life free of violence. The Programme conducted internal capacity-building on human rights accountability and leveraged mechanisms like the universal periodic review and national human rights institutions. The human rights-based approach requires the operationalization of three human rights principles (equality and non-discrimination, participation, and accountability) to guide United Nations development cooperation and focus on capacity development of both duty bearers (i.e., states) to meet their obligations and of rights holders to claim their rights.[25]

1 Under **the principle of equality and non-discrimination**, the Global Programme has been advocating for adolescent girls' rights, preventing pushback on comprehensive sexuality education, and ensuring pregnant girls' right to education in Zambia, Mozambique and Uganda. It also addressed unintended consequences from legal reforms related to ages of consent for marriage, health services, and sexual relationships.

2 Under **the principle of participation**, the Global Programme collaborated with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Government of the Netherlands through an experts' workshop on the impact of existing strategies and initiatives to address child, early and forced marriage and made a case for the importance of observing the principles of protection, autonomy, and evolving capacities of adolescents in the Human Rights Council's Resolution on Forced Marriage. The Global Programme also supported civil society partners to participate and leverage human rights mechanisms at the national, regional and global levels.

3 Under **the principle of accountability**, the Global Programme promoted laws, policies and multisectoral systems to prevent and respond to child marriage, while supporting civil society organizations in advocating for human rights, particularly the right to choose if, and whom, to marry.

---

25   UNFPA, Elevating Rights and Choices for All: Guidance Note for Applying a Human Rights Based Approach to Programming, 2020, unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/2020_HRBA_guidance.pdf

2.3. Leaving no one behind

The Global Programme stepped up efforts to ensure that no girl is left behind by supporting country teams to advocate for, design and implement programmes that increase access to life skills, comprehensive sexuality education, inclusive quality education, SRHR, vocational skills opportunities, adolescent-friendly health services, and social protection. In Phase II, the Global Programme designed technical notes and intersectional tools to ensure that the most marginalized adolescent girls are reached by purposefully targeting hotspots or areas with a high prevalence of child marriage and, within those localities, girls most at risk. Remarkably, 94 per cent of the Programme's direct interventions are in localities where the child marriage prevalence is in the 50th percentile or above the national average.

In Bangladesh, the Global Programme invested in better understanding the disparities and inequalities faced by girls in rural areas, minority communities, humanitarian settings and slums, aiming to make invisible disparities visible. In India, the Global Programme supported the education of tribal girls, established inter-agency protection taskforces and partnered with self-help groups to intentionally target and support indigenous communities, including communities working on tea and sugarcane plantations. In Sierra Leone, efforts were made to support girls with disabilities and give them access to assistive devices. In Uganda, the Global Programme focused on reaching the most structurally marginalized groups of adolescent girls, including those at risk of sexual exploitation. In Yemen, the Global Programme targeted marginalized and crisis-affected adolescent girls by providing empowerment, protection, health and GBV prevention services in women- and girl-friendly safe spaces.

2.4. Youth-led advocacy and accountability

The Global Programme, in collaboration with the African Union and other partners, launched the Youth Power Hub. This regional platform is dedicated to youth-led accountability and advances sexual and reproductive health and rights for young people in Africa. An online campaign was initiated, engaging over 60 youth-led organizations across 21 countries.[26] The campaign culminated in a joint statement on sexual and reproductive health priorities, aimed at influencing policy and national actions to end child marriage.

In partnership with the African Union, the Global Programme launched the African Youth Reference Group and Innovation Challenge. This initiative brought together 200 youths across the continent to reimagine an Africa free of harmful practices and explore innovative ideas promoting mental health in communities, particularly engaging children and young people to address child marriage. The Youth Innovation Challenge awarded US$2,000 seed funding to each of 20 youth groups from 13 countries, recognized for their innovative ideas. The Global Programme also awarded direct small-scale funding to 14 youth-led groups. The funding is estimated to have empowered approximately 1 million young people, supporting those affected by harmful practices and mental health issues, raising advocacy efforts to end child marriage and other harmful practices, and influencing positive change in local communities.

---

26 Countries include Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Comoros, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Sudan, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

2.5. Advocacy and influencing global and regional policy

Global advocacy efforts: In Phase II, the Global Programme continued its advocacy to end child marriage worldwide. It partnered with the Governments of Canada and Zambia, leading the United Nations General Assembly Resolutions on child, early, and forced marriage in 2020 and 2022.[27][28] These resolutions mobilized political will among Member States and sustained momentum for ending child marriage. The Global Programme also contributed critical inputs to the Secretary-General's Report on child marriage, ensuring it reflects data, evidence and strategies to end the practice.

During the COVID pandemic, the Global Programme collaborated with the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Girls Not Brides and the World Health Organization to advocate for investments in adolescent girls' rights and ending child marriage. The Global Programme has also emphasized the importance of ending child marriage at the Commission on the Status

© UNICEF/UN0720024/Tibaweswa

of Women and the United Nations General Assembly in New York, as well as the importance of aligning with SDGs and safeguarding the rights of adolescent girls and boys. High-level side events organized by the Programme allowed key stakeholders to make their voices heard, present evidence, and propose solutions to end child marriage and related human rights violations.

Regional advocacy efforts: The strategic partnership between the Global Programme and the **African Union** has significantly enhanced efforts to end child marriage with a primary emphasis on legislation, institutional capacity strengthening, and evidence-based methodologies. The Global Programme facilitated monitoring missions of the **African Union Goodwill Ambassadors** and the **African Committee of Experts on the Rights** and Welfare of the Child. The monitoring missions have led to law amendments in Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Zambia. Niger, Ghana, Uganda, Zambia, Mozambique and Nigeria have developed or renewed national action plans to end child marriage. The partnership has improved data collection on harmful practices in 24 countries through the training of national statistical officers. The Global Programme has further extended its support by integrating its staff within the African Union Commission to support the technical and coordination efforts of the continental campaigns aimed at ending child marriage. The Global Programme also supported high-level events in lke the African Girls Summit and other events in the occasion of the International Day of the African Child.

The collaboration between the Global Programme and **South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children** (SAIEVAC) has played a significant role in advocating for child rights and creating an environment that aims to end child marriage in South Asia. A multi-stakeholder consultation was organized by

27 UN General Assembly, Child, early and forced marriage: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, 2020, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3896027?v=pdf

28 UN General Assembly, Child, early and forced marriage: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, 2022, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3999506?v=pdf

the Global Programme and SAIEVAC on the International Day of the Girl Child. This led to the formulation of the Action Agenda for Adolescent Girls in South Asia. This agenda is centred on empowering girls, promoting gender equality, and challenging harmful gender norms and practices that restrict their opportunities and autonomy.

In the Middle East and North Africa/Arab States, the Global Programme has been working in collaboration with the member states of the **League of Arab States** to enhance national policies and legal frameworks aimed at preventing harmful practices, including child marriage. A variety of events and initiatives, such as the Arab Girls' Summit, have been organized to empower girls and foster cross-border collaboration. The Regional Action Forum has continued to evolve as a robust platform for advocating and accelerating action to end child marriage. The Global Programme continues to lead in knowledge exchange, research initiatives, and advocacy. In a joint effort with **UNESCWA** and **UN Women**, the Global Programme conducted a study to estimate the economic cost of child marriage in Arab countries. The findings of the study underscore the negative impacts on women and their families, highlighting the urgent need for investment in

prevention and mitigation strategies. Eliminating child marriage in the Arab region would have a significant positive impact on economic growth. It is estimated that it could boost the region's economy by approximately 3 per cent a year, adding a staggering US$3 trillion between 2021 and 2050.[29]

Beyond its scope, the Global Programme has supported advocacy efforts in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Global Programme positioned child marriage as a critical issue in political and multilateral regional forums while promoting Member States' commitments and accountability to prevent and respond to child marriage. The **Aliadas (Allies) Coalition to End Child Marriage**, a multi-stakeholder platform comprising civil society organizations, feminist and youth groups, international NGOs, academics and UN agencies, has been at the forefront of regional advocacy. Through inter-American mechanisms, this coalition has successfully incorporated specific terms and calls to action related to ending child marriage into key regional commitments. Notably, the Santiago Commitment (2021) and Buenos Aires Commitment on Policies of Care (2023) reflect this progress. The region has also included the child marriage indicator in the Regional Gender Equality Observatory of the United Nations Economic Commision for Latin

2.6. Advancing global research and uptake

In Phase II, the Global Programme contributed to the analysis and synthesis of global evidence on effective interventions to prevent child marriage. As a result, there is now much greater clarity on what works and what does not work to end child marriage worldwide. In 2021, the Global Programme published a systematic review titled 'Evolution in the Evidence Base on Child Marriage from 2000–2019'.[31] In 2023, a synthesis

paper of what works to prevent and respond to child marriage was developed to inform the design of Phase III (2024–2030) of the Global Programme. The Global Programme also produced 20 research and evidence products on what does and does not work to end child marriage. The Programme's contribution to the analysis of data was marked by the launch of a dedicated child marriage data portal.[32]

---

29 ESCWA, Estimating the economic costs of child marriage in the Arab region, 2023, https://publications.unescwa.org/2023/eeccm/sdgs/pdf/en/2301255E-Estimating-Economic-Costs-Child-Marriage-Main-Web.pdf

30 Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, Key indicators, https://oig.cepal.org/en

31 UNFPA and UNICEF, Evolution in the Evidence Base on Child Marriage from 2000–2019, 2021, www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Child-marriage-evidence-report-2021.pdf

32 The Child Marriage Data Portal, https://childmarriagedata.org/

In Phase II, the Global Programme developed a Research Strategy to inform national and subnational policies and programmes related to child marriage.[33] The goal was to improve effectiveness in preventing child marriage and supporting married girls through scalable, sustainable, rights-based and gender-transformative approaches. Two key mechanisms were established:

1 **Child Marriage Research to Action Network (CRANK)**: Created in collaboration with Girls Not Brides, CRANK offers a research tracker and a global platform where academics, policymakers and practitioners can connect. Since its inception it has provided a platform for a better-coordinated global research agenda, has disseminated quarterly a total of 125 publications on the latest evidence on child marriage priority topics since 2021, and encouraged the uptake of evidence among the over 600 subscribed practitioners and policymakers. The external evaluation shows that the CRANK is effectively serving its core objective to disseminate evidence on child marriage priority topics and deepening many stakeholders' understanding of child marriage evidence, solutions and emerging priorities. The Global Programme has been translating the key findings and recommendations into concise evidence briefs for practitioners. These initiatives are significantly enhancing the use of contextualized evidence on effective strategies to end child marriage.

2 **Strategic Technical Assistance on Research (STAR)**: Established in partnership with UNICEF Innocenti – Global Office of Research and Foresight, STAR provides technical research support and strengthens research capacity across countries. It ensures quality assurance and encourages policymakers and programme implementers to use evidence effectively.

Twelve regional convenings were also held to share the most recent evidence. The key findings and recommendations were synthesized into concise evidence briefs. The Global Programme also published three journal articles. These initiatives significantly enhanced the use of contextualized evidence on effective strategies to end child marriage. The collaboration with WHO resulted in a systematic review of the latest evidence on effective interventions to prevent adolescent pregnancy and child marriage, contributing to the Global Programme's priority of addressing the evidence gap on the interlinkages between adolescent pregnancy and child marriage prevention.

2.7. State of the evidence on child marriage

Various interventions have proved to be effective in reducing the risks of child marriage. The most consistent evidence supports the importance of education for adolescent girls. Enrolling girls in school, particularly secondary school, and supporting their learning are key, scalable strategies. Cash and in-kind transfers that help families meet basic needs and cover education expenses have also proved beneficial. Targeted empowerment interventions, such as life skills programmes, comprehensive sexuality education and sexual and reproductive health services for girls, have been effective. Interventions related to job market and vocational training have shown potential. Programmes that strengthen systems can reduce child marriage risks by better meeting girls' holistic needs. Interventions that change social and gender norms can challenge harmful attitudes and behaviours driving child marriage, especially when combined with other interventions. However, there is still limited high-quality of evidence of the effectiveness of such interventions. More research is needed to understand what makes law, policy, and community-based interventions more effective and to build an evidence bridge between interventions that reduce unintended pregnancy and those that prevent child marriage.

---

33 UNFPA and UNICEF, Research Strategy for Phase II: the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to end child marriage, 2021, www.unfpa.org/publications/research-strategy-phase-ii-unfpa-unicef-global-programme-end-child-marriage

CHAPTER 3:

PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE RESULTS FRAMEWORK

The Global Programme's Phase II vision is for adolescent girls, especially the most marginalized, to fully enjoy their childhood free from the risk of child marriage, and experience healthier, safer, and more empowered life transitions, including making choices about their education, sexuality, relationships, marriage and childbearing. The Global Programme supports governments and civil society partners, including women- and youth-led organizations and feminist movements, to accelerate action to end child marriage. At the heart of the theory of change is an adolescent girl-centred approach that empowers individual adolescent girls to make decisions about if, when and whom to marry, within a web of support that involves her family, the community (including boys and men), service providers, society and public structures, institutions, systems and services, laws and policies.

Phase II was implemented according to programme principles, core approaches and key strategies as shown below.

Principles and approaches

- ↘ **Human rights-based approach.**

- ↘ **Gender transformation and the rights of women and girls.**

- ↘ **Leave no one behind and an intersectional approach.**

- ↘ **Adolescent girl-centred approach to development, empowerment, and protection.**

- ↘ **Systems strengthening and community mobilization.**

Aims from Phase II programme document

- ↘ **Use the demonstration and catalytic power of (i) strengthened systems; (ii) mobilized communities; and (iii) empowered girls to further accelerate progress at significantly large scale.**

- ↘ **Scale up interventions and strengthen systems to reach more girls, locations and countries.**

- ↘ **Increase political and social support to end child marriage.**

- ↘ **Engage more governments, donors and actors.**

- ↘ **Finance and implement budgeted plans.**

- ↘ **Achieve demonstrable change in some significant locations of considerable size.**

Strategies from Phase II theory of change

- ↘ **Create and expand opportunities for the empowerment of adolescent girls.**

- ↘ **Promote a supportive and gender-equal family and community environment.**

- ↘ **Strengthen governance to prevent child marriage.**

- ↘ **Enhance sustainability and impact of child marriage programmes.**

- ↘ **Build partnerships and leverage additional resources and co-investments.**

This chapter presents key Global Programme results for 2023 as well as key achievements in Phase II (2020–2023) that have been consolidated from the 12 focus countries in 4 regions. The results are organized by three intermediate and six immediate outcomes.

© UNICEF/UNI439827/Lehnù

3.1. Providing intensive support to marginalized girls

The Global Programme has effectively empowered adolescent girls to make informed decisions about marriage and their sexual and reproductive health, thereby transforming their knowledge, skills and capabilities. The 2023 Phase II independent evaluation concluded that the Global Programme increased the knowledge and skills of targeted adolescent girls at risk of, and affected by, child marriage, equipping them to make informed decisions and choices regarding marriage, education, and sexual and reproductive health. The Global Programme facilitated access to comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), life skills education and protective asset-building for girls both in and out of school. In some contexts, implementation has emphasized financial and economic empowerment interventions designed to mitigate poverty drivers of child marriage.

Table 2: Number of adolescent girls (aged 10–19) who actively participated in life skills or CSE interventions in programme areas, disaggregated by age, marital status and disability

Country	2019 Results	2020 Results	2021 Results	2022 Results	2023							Phase II (2020-2023) consolidated results	
Indicator 1111: Number of adolescent girls (aged 10-19) who actively participated in life skills or CSE interventions in programme areas, disaggregated by age and disability					Targets	Results	Unmarried	Married	10-14 yr	15-19 yr	With disabilities	Targets	Results
Bangladesh	89,974	88,770	96,592	25,393	80,720	378,237	365,597	12640	207,771	170,466	36,778	451,246	588,992
Burkina Faso	310,042	112,123	44,825	83,412	60,000	88,641	88,554	87	45,207	43,434	266	469,048	329,001
Ethiopia	261,244	152,782	49,449	145,415	200,000	201,955	183,604	18,351	108,681	93,274	1,364	508,071	549,601
Ghana	20,046	27,274	19,376	23,024	34,137	21,934	21,898	36	10,311	11,623	195	116,116	91,608
India	2,496,395	3,610,573	2,041,980	5,603,377	6,896,395	5,772,130	5,699,992	72138	3,938,462	1,833,668	751	18,302,787	17,028,060
Mozambique	51,676	4,185	NA	4,500	56,533	50,455	49,087	1368	29,330	21,125	0	184,215	59,140
Nepal	4,175	3,533	75,062	57,011	38,000	14,076	13,968	108	8,790	5,286	18	134,000	149,682
Niger	9,505	12,471	43,009	19,603	20,500	26,420	24,234	2,186	7,898	18,522	9	87,640	101,503
Sierra Leone	26,192	12,000	11,058	18,220	24,000	13,066	13,006	60	7,300	5,766	144	96,500	54,344
Uganda	135,690	74,335	200,407	204,181	233,690	306,846	305,182	1664	113,114	193,732	16	774,760	785,769
Yemen	5,324	2,457	2,049	29,789	35,000	42,222	41,856	366	12,254	29,968	2	42,678	76,517
Zambia	3,447	5,923	6,108	94,616	106,340	206,707	206,668	39	0	206,707	0	136,240	313,354
Total	**3,413,710**	**4,106,426**	**2,589,915**	**6,308,541**	**7,785,315**	**7,122,689**	**7,013,646**	**109,043**	**4,489,118**	**2,633,571**	**39,543**	**21,303,301**	**20,127,571**

In 2023, the Global Programme enhanced the knowledge and life skills of over 7.1 million adolescent girls vulnerable to or affected by child marriage. There is substantial evidence across all Global Programme countries that girls benefited from CSE in schools (as part of the curriculum), through school clubs, or in community safe space sessions facilitated by mentors and supported by grassroots CSOs and front-line health workers. There is progressive use of evidence to guide programming on the intersectional needs of vulnerable girls (e.g., girls with disabilities, married girls, girls in urban areas and some humanitarian crisis contexts) through the mobilization of local CSOs. Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, India, Uganda and Zambia are among the countries that were able to mobilize grassroots CSOs through capacity-building, sharing guidance, data and evidence for advocacy, and improving child marriage prevention or response. The targets of indicator 1111 were overachieved by the life skills education provided in community safe spaces. However, some countries' achievements were impacted by the growing insecurity in some programme areas (e.g., Ghana), digital data security concerns (e.g., Nepal), and delays in rolling out CSE curricula in schools due to political interference (e.g., Sierra Leone).

Current programme data indicate a positive trend towards an increase in the numbers of adolescent girls with comprehensive sexual and reproductive health knowledge, rising from 35.7 per cent at the baseline in 2019 to 78.8 per cent by the end of Phase II in 2023. Girls' agency, as shown by the proportion of girls who express an increased sense of self-efficacy, who feel confident in their ability to negotiate and delay early marriage, and who feel comfortable speaking without fear, increased from 37.7 per cent in 2019 at baseline to 65 per cent in 2023.

In Ethiopia, programme tools tailored to overcome barriers have increased girls' uptake of life skills education: 76 per cent reported higher self-efficacy and ability to delay child marriage; 97 per cent of girls aged 15–18 make informed decisions about sexual relations and reproductive health; and 77 per cent affirmed their right to refuse marriage, with over 60 per

© UNICEF/UNI477843/

cent of reported child marriage cases cancelled. In Bangladesh, the 'Her Story, My Choice' session improved skills and school retention for 83 per cent of girls. A specialized Alternative Learning Program that integrates skill development and job opportunities was developed for marginalized adolescents and young women, including survivors of child marriage, widows, divorcees, and those who are separated. The programme was introduced at the community level through informal apprenticeship and entrepreneurship interventions. In Nepal, due to COVID, the country teams adapted the 'Rupantaran' programme to the digital space. During the implementation the e-learning platform's launch was delayed due to data privacy, user confidentiality and interoperability reviews, to ensure safety in the digital space and to prevent technology-facilitated gender-based violence.[34] Despite the challenges, 61.3 per cent of participating girls reported increased self-efficacy and confidence in delaying early marriage. Fifty-six per cent had comprehensive sexual and health knowledge, with in-school girls and older girls (15–19 years) scoring higher.

The Global Programme prioritized keeping adolescent girls in school (enrolment, re-enrolment, retention, and transition to higher grades or skill-building) across most countries. Success was highest when Global Programme interventions aligned with local or national incentives and were supported by a conducive social, economic and political environment.

---

34 UNFPA, Guidance on the safe and ethical use of technology to address Gender-based Violence and Harmful Practices: Implementation Summary, 2023, www.unfpa.org/publications/implementation-summary-safe-ethical-use-technology-gbv-harmful-practices

Table 3: Number of girls (10–19) supported by the Global Programme to enrol and/or remain in primary or secondary school, disaggregated by age and marital status

Country — **Indicator 1121**: Number of girls (10-19) supported by the programme to enrol and/or remain in primary or secondary school, disaggregated by age and marital status

Country	2019 Results	2020 Results	2021 Results	2022 Results	2023							Phase II (2020-2023) consolidated results	
					Targets	Results	Unmarried	Married	10-14 yr	15-19 yr	With disabilities	Targets	Results
Bangladesh	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Burkina Faso	27,197	32,956	14,070	2,008	6,200	12,089	12,089	0	5,319	6,770	0	27,904	61,123
Ethiopia	58,580	NA	7,413	33,674	46,000	49,705	45,416	4,289	24,137	25,568	283	167,321	90,792
Ghana	1,000	1,029	1,094	1,081	1,100	1,096	1,096	0	263	833	11	4,216	4,300
India	217,731	114,740	84,983	84,090	375,000	2,348,227	2,341,857	6,370	888,031	1,460,196	0	1,050,731	2,632,040
Mozambique	1,576	1,226	384	1,113	2,340	4,006	3,746	260	2,540	1,466	56	7,876	7,956
Nepal	7,908	7,716	7,691	8,339	8,108	12,027	11,989	38	4,603	7,424	0	37,832	35,773
Niger	NA	276	1,649	3,000	3,500	13,941	11,755	2,186	5,018	8,923	0	16,000	18,866
Sierra Leone	NA	NA	812	1,155	750	1,277	1,277	0	363	914	44	2,000	5,025
Uganda	23,108	183	14,144	13,880	23,461	31,461	20,407	11,054	11,221	20,240	0	85,213	59,668
Yemen	273	88	736	2,393	2,000	2,064	1,980	84	697	1,367	0	3,800	5,281
Zambia	NA	2,264	989	10,713	12,983	13,158	12,764	394	0	13158	0	23,804	27,124
Total	**337,373**	**160,478**	**133,965**	**161,446**	**481,442**	**2,489,051**	**2,464,376**	**24,675**	**942,192**	**1,546,859**	**394**	**1,426,697**	**2,944,940**

In 2023, the Global Programme supported nearly 2.5 million vulnerable adolescent girls to enrol, return, or stay in primary or secondary school. **In India**, the Global Programme supported revisions to state flagship schemes by removing all restrictions on girl beneficiaries within a family. Through the 'Getting Girls Back to School' initiative, the Global Programme in partnership with local institutions provided incentives to front-line workers mapping marginalized girls under 14 years old and enrolling them in formal and vocational education schools. All these incentives played a crucial role in significantly increasing school enrolment among the most marginalized girls. The Global Programme creation of a cadre of 10,378 adolescents and youth volunteers, including scouts and guides with access to over 5 million adolescents has intensified the access, awareness, and engagement of families and communities on issues relating to safer schools. This has led to increased enrolment of adolescent girls with support from the volunteers. **In Niger**, the Global Programme implemented alternative learning programmes to ensure education continuity in crisis-hit regions. In 2023, it established 85 temporary learning spaces, provided essential equipment, and distributed educational materials. This effort sustained education for 44,094 children, 40 per cent of them girls, in crisis-affected areas like Diffa, Maradi, Tillabéri and Tahoua. Additionally, 590 6th-grade girls received scholarships to stay in school.

In Mozambique, the Global Programme has made progress by strengthening government and community structures and involving girls' parents and guardians to foster a gender-responsive educational environment. The Programme and its partners improved community services, enhancing the prevention of and response to child marriage and violence. A real-time monitoring system was introduced for joint reporting of child marriage cases. Collaboration with the Supreme Court and Prosecutor led to mobile courts in Zambezia province for child marriage and Violence Against Children (VAC) cases, ensuring access to services for remote communities. The Programme also worked with the Department of Religious Affairs in the Ministry of Justice, deploying high-ranking officers to nine districts to collaborate with local religious leaders on issues related to child marriage, violence against girls and women, and harmful social norms. As a result, 4,006 vulnerable girls, including some whose marriages were cancelled, were reintegrated into schools. Mentors and community leaders played a key role in this process, emphasizing the importance of education for the girls' future and fostering family support for their educational aspirations. **In Uganda**, the Global Programme introduced guidelines to help adolescent girls affected by COVID-19 school

closures to re-enrol in both formal and non-formal education. The Programme fostered the development of flexible learning pathways and carried out community outreach. Consequently, over 30,000 child mothers and pregnant girls returned to school, and 1,556 marginalized adolescents, including 1,225 refugees, resumed learning through the Accelerated Education Programme. **In Nepal**, the Global Programme tackled child marriage through an integrated approach, providing holistic services for vulnerable girls. It strengthened key actors and structures for adolescent protection, aligned with Nepal's governance structure, and aided in developing plans to implement the National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage. The Programme provided scholarships, engaged with families and communities, and challenged harmful practices. It offered flexible learning options and established Community Watch Groups to monitor protection against. Youth networks were formed to advocate for rights and local government support, empowering young individuals to participate in community changes. As a result, 12,027 girls were enrolled and supported to stay in school.

The enhancement of schools' capacity to foster a gender-responsive educational environment in some countries (e.g., India, Mozambique and Nepal), and thereby improving girls' enrolment and retention, was one of the main reasons why the Global Programme overachieved the set target five-fold. Furthermore, the Global Programme's partnerships with multilateral agencies (e.g., Ethiopia, Sierra Leone), the private sector (e.g., Niger and Mozambique), and local feminist and women-led organizations (e.g., India, Uganda and Zambia) have bolstered support for adolescent girls' school enrolment and retention.

Current programme data indicate that the proportion of adolescent girls of lower-secondary school age in the Global Programme countries who are out of school has fallen from 30.7 per cent in 2019 at baseline to 9.7 per cent in 2023. However, the COVID-19 period saw a rise in the proportion of girls that were out of school, peaking at 32 per cent between 2021 to 2022, and slowly reducing to 26.7 per cent by the end of 2022.

In India, the Global Programme provided technical support in redesigning and leveraging state government schemes to intentionally target marginalized girls with education scholarships. The Global Programme also intensified gender-transformative programming efforts to address barriers to education for adolescent girls. **In Niger**, a recent study conducted during the review and development of the national strategic plan has revealed a shift in attitudes. More parents are now recognizing the value of their daughter's education, and are encouraging their daughters to delay marriage. This change in perspective is reducing barriers to education, leading to an increase in girls' enrolment and retention in schools. However, the gross enrolment parity at the primary school level for 7–12-year-olds has remained unchanged since 2022, standing at 72.4 per cent for boys and 64.3 per cent for girls. In contrast, at the secondary school level, the parity is narrowing, with enrolment rates of 33.15 per cent for girls and 37.47 per cent for boys.

© UNICEF/UNI532183/Ayene

CASE STUDY: HAWA AKTER'S TRIUMPH OVER CHILD MARRIAGE - BANGLADESH

Hawa Akter, a 15-year-old girl, lives in the Jamtala slum of Ward 34, Chittagong City Corporation. She lives with her parents and two younger sisters. As the eldest daughter in the family, she carries a significant share of her family's hopes and dreams. Her father, a day labourer, and her mother, a homemaker, struggle to make ends meet. The family's financial struggles have been a constant challenge, with her father finding it difficult to cover all their expenses.

In an unexpected turn of events, Hawa's father, under the influence of a relative's advice, considered marrying her off at a young age. Despite being aware of the negative consequences of child marriage, he selected a 25-year-old garment worker as her prospective groom. This decision was driven by the harsh realities of their financial situation rather than the welfare of his daughter.

Hawa, however, was not ready to accept this fate. Having attended the Kishori Resource Centre (KRC), a safe centre supported by the Global Programme to End Child Marriage in Bangladesh, and understanding the implications of child marriage, she made earnest attempts to persuade her parents against it. Unfortunately, her pleas fell on deaf ears as her parents remained adamant.

In desperation, Hawa sought support from the KRC. She shared her predicament with fellow girls and the KRC management committee members. The KRC, understanding the gravity of the situation, responded promptly. The President of the KRC Management Committee, along with relevant staff and other members, visited Hawa's home. They engaged in discussions with her parents, emphasizing the child marriage laws and outlining the negative consequences associated with such early unions. The committee fervently requested Hawa's parents not to proceed with the marriage.

Their efforts bore fruit when Hawa's father reconsidered his decision. As a result, Hawa is now enrolled in school, escaping the potential harm of early marriage. This successful intervention showcases the importance of community-based organizations and their role in preventing child marriages and empowering adolescent girls.

This case study serves as a beacon of hope, demonstrating that with the right support and resources, girls like Hawa can overcome societal pressures and chart their own course in life. It underscores the importance of community-based organizations like the KRC in safeguarding the rights of girls and empowering them to make informed decisions about their lives. It also highlights the need for continued efforts to end child marriage and promote education among adolescent girls.

3.2. Enhancing the family and community environment

The Global Programme mobilized community stakeholders to contribute to changing the social and gender norms and stereotypes that perpetuate harmful practices and to create a more gender-equal environment.

The 2023 Phase II independent evaluation found that "the Global Programme mobilized community stakeholders to contribute to changing the social and gender norms that perpetuate harmful practices. This has included

the engagement of traditional and religious leaders – and increasingly, parents and caregivers – as agents of change. An important priority of the Global Programme in Phase II was the systematic engagement of boys and men to promote healthy relationships, positive masculinities and gender equality, and countries designed and initiated interventions accordingly. Engagement with extended families has however been more limited, despite their important role in decisions related to child marriage in many contexts."

Current programme data show a decline in the support for marrying girls and boys before age 18, from 52.9 per cent in 2019 to 42.9 per cent in 2023. There has been a decline in the social pressure on parents to marry off their daughters, from 52.9 per cent in 2019 to 42.9 per cent in 2023. There has also been an increase in recognition of positive rewards associated with the abandonment of child marriage, from 44 per cent in 2019 to 63.5 per cent in 2023. Most importantly, the proportion of parents who believe the girl should make the final decision to marry has increased from 8 per cent in 2019 to 49.8 per cent in 2023.

Table 4: Number of boys and men actively participating in group education/dialogues that address harmful masculinities and gender norms.

Country	Indicator 1211: Number of boys and men actively participating in group education/dialogues that address harmful masculinities and gender norms									
	2019 Results	2020 Results	2021 Results	2022 Results	2023				Phase II (2020-2023) consolidated results	
					Targets	Results	Boys	Men	Targets	Results
Bangladesh	159,029	44,529	23,177	3,015	27,000	330,181	169,719	160,462	378,983	400,902
Burkina Faso	76,151	176,775	73,560	97,722	75,000	74,394	37,941	36,453	190,000	422,451
Ethiopia	37,481	178,501	41,031	72,435	95,000	174,814	101,543	73,271	190,955	466,781
Ghana	792	4,986	4,392	8,441	10,663	15,435	9,205	6,230	23,964	33,254
India	NA	5,900,558	951,126	3,735,249	4,900,000	5,972,539	5,037,130	935,409	6,900,000	16,559,472
Mozambique	742	1,295	4,875	16,070	21,500	46,821	39,634	7187	30,800	69,061
Nepal	4,100	432	1262	11158	11,500	10,515	5813	4702	51,000	23,367
Niger	NA	6,296	16,130	15,165	19,000	16,244	5,033	11,211	57,980	53,835
Sierra Leone	NA	5,276	4,870	18,662	10,750	8,128	8,020	108	43,000	36,936
Uganda	NA	28,000	10,120	78,713	100,000	116,291	61135	55156	213,000	233,124
Yemen	1,000	604	8638		3,700	4,251	2,665	1586	8,670	13,493
Zambia	NA	4,325	8,946	17,450	30,900	38,736	25,213	13,523	56,650	69,457
Total	**159,029**	**6,351,577**	**1,148,127**	**4,074,080**	**5,305,013**	**6,808,349**	**5,503,051**	**1,305,298**	**8,145,002**	**18,382,133**

In 2023, country offices enhanced their social and behavioural change activities and the actions derived from the gender-transformative accelerator regarding engaging men and boys and promoting positive masculinities. These efforts included a significant enhancement in male engagement, which encouraged critical reflection on gender and power dynamics and amplified the focus on positive masculinities within the Programme. As a result, over 6.8 million boys and men participated in programmes that foster healthy relationships and promote positive masculinities.[35] This was achieved through integrating content, such as manuals on men's and boys' engagement, and tailoring

delivery mechanisms to involve female and male community members. **In Bangladesh**, the Global Programme used innovative social behavioural change tools effectively. Through social media, mass awareness campaigns, and unique audiovisual materials, it reached a wide audience and facilitated discussions among men and boys on crucial issues related to child marriage. **In Ethiopia**, a new evidence-based, gender-transformative manual for boys and men structured the training, dialogue sessions and community outreach activities. As a result, 174,814 men and boys were reached through educational dialogues in the community. **In India**, programme strategies were adapted to suit the schedules and gathering places

---

35 Rumble et al., 'Early learnings from UNICEF's work to employ gender transformative approaches to advance adolescent girls' rights', 2024.

of men and boys. For example, 'Ratri Chaupal' evening meetings were organized in Bihar to engage men and boys in discussions on gender inequality. In Assam, the Programme formed and sustained boys' groups in tea garden villages, engaging them weekly on positive masculinity themes. A shift was made from facilitator-led learning to peer-to-peer learning, as boys often idolize and look up to role models. These tailored approaches resulted in about 6 million boys participating in dialogues and interventions to challenge harmful masculinities and gender norms.

Table 5: Number of individuals (boys, girls, women and men) who participated in group education/dialogue sessions on consequences of and alternatives to child marriage, the rights of adolescent girls, and gender equality (by sex)

Country	Indicator 1221: Number of individuals (boys, girls, women and men) who participate in group education/dialogue sessions on consequences of and alternatives to child marriage, the rights of adolescent girls, and gender equality, by sex.											
	2019 Results	2020 Results	2021 Results	2022 Results	2023						Phase II (2020-2023) consolidated results	
					Targets	Results	Girls	Boys	Women	Men	Targets	Results
Bangladesh	560,412	11,301,743	5,203,668	768,654	4,800,000	2,347,882	811,970	709,558	501,957	324,397	15,594,037	19,621,947
Burkina Faso	204,809	237,555	346,828	268,675	270,000	115,546	19,643	18,487	48,529	28,887	888,453	968,604
Ethiopia	471,890	484,696	504,626	613,989	764,820	996,481	168,295	79,144	406,162	342,880	2,550,099	2,599,792
Ghana	95,686	41,719	85,301	590,900	215,686	485,030	115,328	88,171	157,235	124,296	607,058	1,202,950
India	1,347,245	8,252,151	9,328,524	13,320,308	15,893,000	9,224,595	3,122	1,174	5,332,047	3,888,252	35,472,000	40,125,578
Mozambique	44,216	4,819	150,754	18,079	22,342	37,370	13,762	10,687	7,506	5,415	238,516	211,022
Nepal	4,256	8,014	46,229	48,617	65,000	48,448	7,866	9,437	16,466	14,679	190,000	151,308
Niger	80,709	17,852	73,943	120,039	103,990	120,039	23,543	11,817	37,315	47,364	328,870	306,704
Sierra Leone	580	15,927	112,009	39,754	31,750	31,030	245	216	19,562	11,007	81,825	198,720
Uganda	55,568	46,876	101,924	301,842	450,000	409,648	120,664	154,259	61,141	73,584	784,000	860,290
Yemen	28,564	17,529	11,392	50,429	60,564	102,857	35,935	26,388	22,934	17,600	137,796	182,207
Zambia	2,739	2,200	32,684	11,234	106,429	209,894	0	0	49,278	160,616	200,122	256,012
Total	**2,896,674**	**20,444,685**	**15,997,882**	**16,152,520**	**22,783,581**	**14,128,820**	**1,320,373**	**1,109,338**	**6,660,132**	**5,038,977**	**51,662,776**	**66,685,134**

To create an enabling environment, and to ensure the sustainability of gender-equal practices and strengthen in-country capacities to implement gender-transformative activities, the Global Programme launched a series of reflective activities in group education aimed at addressing the root causes of child marriage and gender inequality and transforming harmful social and gender roles, norms and power relations among Global Programme staff and implementing partners. Over 14 million individuals (boys, girls, women and men) participated in group education/dialogue sessions on the consequences of and alternatives to child marriage, the rights of adolescent girls, and gender equality. However, despite these efforts, the Global Programme faced significant challenges in certain countries. Bangladesh, Burkina Faso and India encountered obstacles that prevented the achievement of programme targets.

In India, the diminishing space for CSOs was a major hurdle, hindering the Programme's ability to expand reflective education dialogues in communities. The repeal of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, which permitted organizations to receive foreign funding, affected the field staff capacity of CSO implementing partners, thereby impacting most community engagement interventions. This had a significant effect on the Global Programme's ability to scale up and meet its objectives. **In Bangladesh**, despite the Global Programme's support, timely scheduling and conducting of community reflective education dialogues became a significant challenge. Dialogues planned for the year-end experienced delays, mainly due to the upcoming national election, which demanded the attention of community child protection committee heads and members. **In Burkina Faso**, security issues hinder the organization of community dialogue sessions and meetings. The frequent movement and displacement of populations affect the Programme's community engagement activities. A lack of resources also impedes the expansion of community engagement interventions across targeted communities.

Table 6: Number of individuals (boys, girls, women and men) reached by mass media (traditional and social media) messaging on child marriage, the rights of adolescent girls and gender equality

Country	Indicator 1222: Number of individuals (boys, girls, women, and men) reached by mass media (traditional and social media) messaging on child marriage, the rights of adolescent girls, and gender equality											
	2019 Results	2020 Results	2021 Results	2022 Results	2023						Phase II (2020-2023) consolidated results	
					Targets	Results	Girls	Boys	Women	Men	Targets	Results
Bangladesh	1,000,000	38,497,147	10,004,148	49,716,776	11,202,720	77,228,913	11,493,561	19,976,767	14,871,516	30,887,069	46,108,160	175,446,984
Burkina Faso	3,120,687	3,000,000	7,300,000	1,595,470	3,480,000	10,000,000	1,400,000	1,600,000	2,700,000	4,300,000	25,187,014	21,895,470
Ethiopia	1,131,326	2,063,000	1,026,690	2,180,428	3,563,000	4,129,340	377,535	572,213	1,263,923	1,915,669	20,791,266	9,399,458
Ghana	NA	65,253	1,051,599	290,987	632,608	2,940,065	990,802	826,158	370,448	752,657	2,457,776	4,347,904
India	3,159,000	3,110,515	19,833,878	79,385,255	88,320,000	29,123,671	6,768,106	4,897,654	8,963,790	8,494,121	153,055,271	131,453,319
Mozambique	2,500,000	2,000,000	2,213,000	5,000,000	2,700,000	1,997,330	460,786	225,369	866,097	445,078	10,370,000	11,210,330
Nepal	1,208,396	21,618	2,600,000	10,231,573	1,608,396	12,721	5,219	5,502	1,000	1,000	4,925,188	12,865,912
Niger	158,570	36,369	6,910,617	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	6,905,312	6,946,986
Sierra Leone	NA	3,649,144	352,089	3,329,509	3,300,000	253,413	23,341	35,012	83,695	111,365	4,250,000	7,584,155
Uganda	1,485,744	338,060	3,005,000	2,997,765	4,483,509	9,000,000	23,000	50,200	4,020,000	4,906,800	10,011,604	15,340,825
Yemen	10,000	5,560	NA	NA	40,000	460,000	0	0	0	460,000	87,500	465,560
Zambia	NA	NA	800000	1,032,860	1,800,000	235,094	30,536	33,045	86,715	84,798	3,360,000	2,067,954
Total	**13,773,723**	**78,438,433**	**55,097,021**	**155,760,623**	**121,130,233**	**135,380,547**	**21,572,886**	**28,221,920**	**33,227,184**	**52,358,557**	**287,509,091**	**399,024,857**

Mass media and community structures were leveraged to amplify positive norms and practices among families and communities. **In Ethiopia, Ghana** and some **Indian states**, community-led interventions engage parents to generate solutions to child marriage. Ghana's Child Marriage Free Community Alert Campaign encourages community members to engage proactively in preventing and stopping child marriage. **In Ethiopia** and **India**, community leaders proudly declare their villages or temples child marriage-free, further reinforcing the new, positive norms and expectations. Overall, the Global Programme reached over 135 million people through media, disseminating key messages about child marriage, girls' rights and gender equality.

Table 7: Number of local actors (e.g., traditional, religious and community leaders) with meaningful participation in dialogues and consensus-building to end child marriage

Country	Indicator 1223: Number of local actors (e.g., traditional, religious and community leaders) with meaningful participation in dialogues and consensus-building to end child marriage									
	2019 Results	2020 Results	2021 Results	2022 Results	2023				Phase II (2020-2023) consolidated results	
					Targets	Results	Female	Male	Targets	Results
Bangladesh	13,510	23,409	15,036	35,000	28,031	10,920	17,111	131,722	79,986	175,446,984
Burkina Faso	9,978	6,428	5,920	3,000	4,106	821	3,285	12,100	26,432	21,895,470
Ethiopia	147,108	22,497	10,557	11,000	37,886	6,628	31,258	15,584	218,048	9,399,458
Ghana	1,200	2,116	4,216	4,500	1,446	615	831	6,618	8,978	4,347,904
India	16,745	67,634	776,580	817,745	1,210,952	838,880	372,072	954,585	2,071,911	131,453,319
Mozambique	157	663	268	250	784	171	613	850	1,872	11,210,330
Nepal	378	836	1,178	1,200	1,185	72	1,113	2,010	3,577	12,865,912
Niger	734	772	544	391	520	3	517	1,503	2,570	6,946,986
Sierra Leone	1,538	980	1,865	1,250	8,185	2,438	5,747	3,575	12,568	7,584,155
Uganda	1,623	37,602	3,373	2,478	2,518	1,183	1,335	7,944	45,116	15,340,825
Yemen	143	150	NA	200	315,300	315,000	300	488	315,593	465,560
Zambia	141	90	6,140	3,000	107	6	101	5,500	6,478	2,067,954
Total	**193,255**	**163,177**	**825,677**	**880,014**	**1,611,020**	**1,176,737**	**434,283**	**1,142,479**	**2,793,129**	**399,024,857**

© UNICEF/UN0753452/Folly

To enhance the enabling environment, the Global Programme engaged over 1.6 million local gatekeepers. These included traditional, religious and community leaders, who participated in dialogues and consensus-building to end child marriage. Specifically **in India**, over 1.2 million such actors participated in dialogues and coalitions to prevent child marriage. Many states nurtured coalitions and forums of faith-based and traditional leaders at district and state levels. A notable achievement in Odisha was the prohibition of child marriages in temples and religious festivals, a move supported by faith leaders and implemented by the state administration.

Table 8: Number of CSOs newly mobilized in support of challenging social norms and promoting gender equality by the Global Programme (cumulative results)

Country	Indicator 1231: Number of CSOs newly mobilized in support of challenging social norms and promoting gender equality by the Global Programme (cumulative)						
	2020 Results	2021 Results	2022 Results	2023		Phase II (2020-2023) consolidated results	
				Targets	Results	Targets	Results
Bangladesh	5	26	25	35	35	77	91
Burkina Faso	4	0	10	8	10	22	24
Ethiopia	1	1	31	46	6	46	37
Ghana	2	1	10	13	0	41	13
India	22	73	73	115	679	440	847
Mozambique	2	2	1	2	3	8	8
Nepal	5	1	1	3	1	43	8
Niger	1	0	5	2	0	94	6
Sierra Leone	0	0	1	1	2	3	3
Uganda	4	0	14	19	23	47	41
Yemen	3	NA		2	2	3	5
Zambia	30	18	2	11	16	63	66
Total	**79**	**122**	**173**	**257**	**777**	**946**	**1,182**

In Phase II, 1,182 women's rights and youth-led groups were mobilized to challenge social norms and promote gender equality. In 2023, the Global Programme mobilized 777 women's rights and youth-led groups. The mobilization involved capacity-building, sharing guidance, data and evidence for advocacy, and improving child marriage prevention and response. These groups, previously unaffiliated with the Global Programme, now amplify marginalized voices, especially girls', and play a key role in ending child marriage by identifying issues, formulating solutions and influencing positive outcomes. **In India**, the Global Programme notably strengthened partnerships

with feminist and youth-based organizations, including those working with men and boys. Collaborations were established with networks of civils society organizations, including youth and feminist-based organizations in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. This integration resulted in the empowerment of adolescent girls and boys and the incorporation of child marriage prevention programmes into their regular activities. The Programme reached over 200 CSOs working on child rights. In Odisha, 238 civil society organizations, including women's and youth-led groups, were engaged at the district level, championing adolescents' and women's rights and challenging negative gender norms and harmful practices like child marriage.

CASE STUDY: PROMOTING DISABILITY INCLUSION IN SIERRA LEONE

In the remote village of Gendema, Sierra Leone, a young girl named Adama faced daily challenges due to her physical disability. The stigma associated with disabilities in her community compounded her struggles.

Adama's family, recognizing the limited opportunities in their village, sent her to Potoru, a town offering better prospects for children like her. Despite facing discrimination, Adama found solace in school. However, the death of her uncle, who was her guardian, led to her dropping out.

A turning point came when an adolescent Safe Space, supported by the Global Programme, was introduced in her community. This initiative provided adolescents with life skills education, fostering their knowledge, skills, confidence and rights awareness. It motivated many girls, including Adama, to return to school.

In addition to the Safe Space, the positive parenting education programme and intergenerational dialogue were implemented in Adama's community. These initiatives engaged parents, caregivers and community leaders in discussions about child support, harmful practices, and the effects of harsh discipline.

Adama, overcoming stigma and discrimination, actively participated in the Safe Space sessions. Matilda, a mentor at the Potoru Safe Space, said, "Adama turned her challenges into stepping stones towards her dreams through the support of the Safe Space. Her story is a testament to the power of support in realizing our dreams."

With renewed confidence, Adama resumed her education. Her return to school was met with excitement and acceptance, and her resilience and achievements began to shift community perceptions about disabilities.

Adama, now an inspiration, challenges stereotypes by emphasizing that disability doesn't limit one's capabilities. She says, "I am very happy to be part of the activities at the adolescent safe space. Many of my old friends now have a different perspective of my disability and are more willing to interact with me."

Adama continues her studies, aspiring to become an advocate for people with disabilities. Her journey underscores the transformative impact of community support and empowering initiatives. The life skills sessions through Safe Spaces have helped reduce school drop-out rates among adolescent girls with functional difficulties and related stigmas. The Global Programme aims to support more vulnerable girls in the future, addressing issues like teenage pregnancy and child marriage.

3.3. Enhancing the sustainability of interventions by building resilient systems and expanding partnerships

The Global Programme in Phase II has prioritized the strengthening of multisectoral systems and services, based on the recognition that changes in behaviour through adolescent empowerment and community and family engagement are reinforced and deepened when adolescent girls are supported to learn and develop skills through formal and non-formal education, when relevant systems (health, education, GBV and protection) are supported to provide quality services, and adolescents are reached and equipped to use those services.

The 2023 Phase II independent evaluation found that "by design, the Global Programme embeds ownership and sustainability elements through four of its outcomes aimed at strengthening government systems and community structures. This approach is demonstrating positive signs, particularly in countries with strong commitment, leadership, national and subnational government and local structures. The Global Programme is implementing its interventions with some increased capacity of the sectoral systems to deliver education, health, GBV, child protection and to a lesser extent social protection services."

© UNICEF/UNI541214/Boman

Table 9: Number of primary/secondary/non-formal schools in programme areas providing quality gender-friendly education that meets minimum standards

Country	Indicator 2121: Number of primary/secondary/non-formal schools in programme areas providing quality gender-friendly education that meets minimum standards.										
	2019 Results	2020 Results	2021 Results	2022 Results	2022					Phase II (2020-2023) consolidated results	
					Targets	Results	Primary	Secondary	Non-formal	Targets	Results
Bangladesh	96	NA	144	144	200	NA	NA	NA	NA	650	288
Burkina Faso	351	NA	0	1,004	1,000	355	238	117	0	1,143	1,359
Ethiopia	320	NA	370	304	314	774	768	5	1	840	1,448
Ghana	Na	3	7	7	21	0	0	0	0	49	17
India	10,313	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mozambique	150	160	102	109	110	60	60			460	431
Nepal	120	368	34	350	360	400	0	200	200	576	1,152
Niger	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	8	NA
Sierra Leone	NA	NA	NA	44	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	45	44
Uganda	969	492	208	551	600	588	257	301	30	1,281	1,839
Yemen	NA	NA	NA	NA	16	70	19	35	16	64	70
Zambia	52	58	0	189	207	155	135	18	2	354	402
Total	**12,371**	**1,081**	**865**	**2,702**	**2,828**	**2,402**	**1,477**	**676**	**249**	**5,470**	**7,050**

In 2023, the Global Programme significantly increased the capabilities of 2,402 primary, secondary and non-formal educational institutions, enabling them to foster a gender-responsive environment. The education system strengthening was achieved through comprehensive training programmes for educators, focusing on providing training on psychosocial support, comprehensive sexuality education, and health education, among other areas. The Programme also extended its support to government education departments, assisting in the development of policies and guidelines on critical issues such as menstrual health and hygiene, prevention of adolescent pregnancy, adolescent sexual reproductive health and rights, school gender-based violence, school health and wellness, and the creation of safe school environments.

Furthermore, the Global Programme facilitated the launch of digital technology platforms

© UNICEF/UNI581327/Emad

in most countries. These platforms include child helplines, offering information on sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as providing psychosocial, mental health, and ending child marriage counselling services.

The Global Programme also undertook the distribution of hygiene and dignity kits within schools and communities, to support and encourage the regular attendance of girls at school. This comprehensive approach underscores the Global Programme's commitment to creating a safe, supportive and inclusive educational environment for adolescent girls.

In 2023, the Global Programme significantly enhanced the capabilities of 5,518 service delivery points to improve access to adolescent-responsive health, child protection and GBV services. However, despite previous efforts to establish child protection community committees, current economic shocks, climate-induced displacements, and conflicts in some programme countries (namely Zambia, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso and Niger) are hindering communities from providing resources or sustaining these committees.

Table 10: Number of service delivery points in programme areas providing quality adolescent-responsive services (health, child protection/GBV) that meet minimum standards

Country	Indicator 2131: Number of service delivery points in programme areas providing quality adolescent-responsive services (health, child protection/GBV) that meet minimum standards.									
	2019 Results	2020 Results	2021 Results	2022 Results	2023				Phase II (2020-2023) consolidated results	
					Targets	Results	Health	Child protection/GBV	Targets	Results
Bangladesh	67	182	3,574	3,745	4,472	313	70	243	9,988	7,814
Burkina Faso	126	NA	14	110	119	62	55	7	352	186
Ethiopia	529	358	670	797	820	1,032	199	833	2,852	2,857
Ghana	505	256	634	690	700	2,071	1,935	136	2,124	3,651
India	4,702	NA	438	476	500	769	323	446	960	1,683
Mozambique	52	6	26	46	46	97	1	96	134	169
Nepal	5	124	106	264	348	254	16	238	641	736
Niger	159	NA	NA	10	NA	NA	NA	NA	8	10
Sierra Leone	NA	NA	14	16	20	17	5	12	61	47
Uganda	2,314	NA	274	415	371	873	573	300	1,180	1,562
Yemen	83	33	NA	0	32	18	0	18	95	51
Zambia	49	191	317	1,279	24	12	8	4	986	1,799
Total	**8,591**	**1,150**	**6,067**	**7,848**	**7,452**	**5,518**	**3,185**	**2,333**	**19,381**	**20,565**

The Global Programme collaborated with health departments to enhance the delivery of adolescent health services in 3,185 health service delivery points. This was achieved through a comprehensive approach that included the training of health providers, the establishment of adolescent-friendly safe spaces at both facility and community levels (for instance, 769 adolescent-friendly services were established across four states in India, benefiting over 1.1 million adolescents), and the development and implementation of policies and guidelines on quality adolescent health services. The Global Programme also influenced a redesign of national safety net schemes to extend health benefits to

more vulnerable adolescent girls (for example in Ethiopia, Ghana, India and Sierra Leone).

The Global Programme collaborated with social services departments to enhance the delivery of adolescent-responsive services in 2,333 protection service delivery points. Similarly, it supported the strengthening and establishment of protection units at facility and community levels to support social services in responding to child protection and GBV cases. As a result, in 2023, 2,097,528 adolescent girls accessed prevention and protection services from these Global Programme-supported service delivery points.

CASE STUDY: ANITA'S JOURNEY TO SAFETY AND RECOVERY – MOZAMBIQUE

Anita, a 13-year-old girl from Mocuba, was living in a nightmare. Her stepfather was sexually abusing her, and the family members who knew about it remained silent out of fear. "I had to ask for my niece to be transferred from Mocuba to Milange because I felt that my sister and the rest of the family were covering up an unpleasant situation," said Anita's uncle with great concern.

Recognizing the drastic changes in Anita's behaviour during his visits, her uncle decided to intervene. He brought Anita to live with him in Milange and sought help from the ICPD, a CSO partner with the Global Programme. In Milange, Anita was examined by the ICPD technician who found multiple physical signs of abuse. Anita confessed to the psychologist that she was a constant victim of sexual abuse by her stepfather.

The Global Programme provided Anita with psychosocial and psychological counselling and initiated legal proceedings against the stepfather. The Milange police carried out inter-district investigations, which culminated in the arrest of the stepfather. He was later sentenced to 8 years in prison.

Anita was integrated into the Global Programme supported self-help group in Milange and began antiretroviral therapy treatment at the local health unit. The Global Programme supported her with transportation to and from school to ensure she could finish the school year. Anita successfully passed from 7th to 8th grade, her health improved, and she began to overcome her traumas.

Anita expressed her gratitude: "I'm very happy because aunts Marcela and Helena (ICDP staff) helped me a lot to overcome my fear and offered me an opportunity to have new friends and groups where I can learn how to forget what happened". She also acknowledged her uncle's bravery: "my uncle, my mother's brother, who took the initiative, was very brave, since I never knew my father, he's like my father now…"

Anita dreams of returning to live with her mother and helping friends who may be going through a similar painful experience. She also aspires to become a nurse: "I really liked how they treated me at the health centre, they were very patient with me, I'd like to be a nurse to help save more lives and help my mother and brothers."

This case study highlights the importance of reporting abuse and the transformative power of intervention. Thanks to her uncle's bravery and the partnership support of the Global Programme to ICDP, Anita now has a second chance at life.

© UNICEF/UNI541082/Boman

3.4. Addressing the poverty drivers

Programming to respond to economic fragility and deprivation for at-risk adolescent girls and their families is only feasible through partnership with existing social protection programmes, given the cost and expertise required to implement such programmes at scale.

Poverty and lack of economic opportunities are key drivers of child marriage. The 2023 Phase II evaluation found that "[…] social protection and economic empowerment interventions are resource-intensive and require partnerships with organizations that have the required funding and expertise, and these resources were not always readily available. The Global Programme established partnerships to support adolescent social protection, poverty reduction and empowerment. There is evidence of success, such as providing school subsidies and incentives, vocational training and start-up funds. However, most of these interventions had a limited focus on economic empowerment, career counselling, entrepreneurship and other income-generating activities, with little linkage to social protection schemes."

The Global Programme has shown some successful examples of partnerships with government-led programmes, but it has not fully explored social protection or economic empowerment opportunities that could benefit girls and mitigate poverty-driven child marriage. Successes include school subsidies, incentives,

vocational training and start-up funds. However, these interventions often have a limited focus on economic empowerment and income-generating activities, with little connection to social protection schemes. Yet, in most countries, these linkages remain limited, despite economic insecurity being a significant driver of child marriage, especially in polycrisis contexts.

In 2023, the Global Programme established 454 partnerships with government entities, private sector institutions and local self-help groups. The collaborations were instrumental in strengthening social protection and promoting girls' economic empowerment. More than half of these partnerships were developed in India at the state level, where public and private financing was readily available for social protection schemes for girls. Through these strategic alliances and programme referrals, the Programme was able to extend social protection services to over 6.3 million adolescent girls, leading to improved educational attainment and reduced adolescent birth rates. In countries where the Global Programme has successfully leveraged social protection services, the transition rate for girls in schools has risen from 56.8 per cent in 2019 to 69.2 per cent in 2023. Programme interventions have also contributed to a reduction in adolescent birth rates, which have dropped from 52 per 1,000 in 2019 to 36 per 1,000 girls in most Global Programme areas.

Table 11: Number of partnerships (both formal and informal) established to deliver adolescent-responsive social protection, poverty reduction and economic empowerment programmes and services (cumulative results)

Country	Indicator 2211: Number of partnerships (both formal and informal) established to deliver adolescent-responsive social protection, poverty reduction, and economic empowerment programs and services (Cumulative)									
	2019 Results	2020 Results	2021 Results	2022 Results	2023				Phase II (2020-2023) consolidated results	
					Targets	Results	Formal	Informal	Targets	Results
Bangladesh	4	8	1	10	17	253	10	243	17	253
Burkina Faso	3	1	3	10	11	21	10	11	11	21
Ethiopia	1	2	2	4	6	6	5	1	6	6
Ghana	3	6	8	19	29	34	30	4	29	34
India	3	26	30	384	491	463	344	119	491	463
Mozambique	1	NA	1	4	6	61	0	61	6	61
Nepal	2	1	2	33	15	33	13	20	15	33
Niger	1	NA	2	2	2	2	2	0	2	2
Sierra Leone	10	NA	NA	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Uganda	4	3	4	27	4	27	4	23	4	27
Yemen	Na	NA	NA	3	2	3	3	0	2	3
Zambia	1	1	0	3	2	3	2	1	2	3
Total	**33**	**48**	**53**	**499**	**585**	**906**	**423**	**483**	**585**	**906**

3.5. Facilitating supportive laws and policies

© UNICEF/UN0691134/Wamala

As a high school student in Uganda, Maliama is not just focusing on her own education but also taking action to end child marriage and empower her peers.

Through outreach programmes and radio appearances, Maliama is spreading awareness on the importance of protecting adolescent girls and advocating for their rights. She's empowering girls to speak up, avoid early marriages and teenage pregnancies, and stay in school to pursue their dreams. Every girl deserves the chance to thrive, learn, and build a future of her own choosing. Let's rally behind Maliama and support her efforts to end child marriage and empower girls!

The 2023 Phase II evaluation revealed that the Global Programme's partnerships and advocacy played a key role in renewing commitments to end child marriage globally, regionally and nationally. The Programme aided governments in formulating laws, policies, strategies and costed action plans. However, the adoption of these measures has been slow, and government funding for these plans remains limited. Moreover, in some countries, enforcing age-limit laws for marriage can unintentionally heighten the vulnerability of adolescent girls and their families.

The Global Programme used an evidence-based approach by conducting assessments and reviews to inform the development of tailored capacity-building and technical support packages for policymaking. The Global Programme's 'maturity framework for harmful practices', with associated benchmarks, is being used as an assessment tool allowing governments to review their national laws and policies and identify priority actions towards alignment with international and regional human rights standards and meeting their SDG targets on ending harmful practices.

The Global Programme, in collaboration with the Joint Programme on the Elimination of FGM, has actively supported the African Union's efforts to drive policy and legislative reforms. This was achieved through the adaptation of policy instruments within the Specialized Technical Committees, targeting implementation at the member state level. The African Union Accountability Framework on Harmful Practices, developed with the support of the Global Programme and the FGM Joint Programme, was officially adopted during the Executive Council Meeting in Lusaka.

In East and Southern Africa, the Global Programme has partnered with the South African Development Community (SADC) Parliamentary Forum to promote and enforce the implementation of the SADC Model Law on Child Marriage which guides lawmakers, policymakers, civil society and youth organizations across the SADC region to ensure that the national legislation reflects the commitments of SADC member states to end child marriage. The SADC Model Law serves as an advocacy and awareness tool aimed at ending child marriage.[36] On 10 March 2023, a Joint Session was held in Johannesburg, South Africa. This session was dedicated to the domestication and implementation of these laws, providing a platform to reflect on challenges, share good practices, and discuss future directions. The Global Programme has pledged its support to parliamentarians in the region to expedite the adoption of these laws. The Global Programme emphasizes the crucial role of legislative bodies in advancing sexual and reproductive health rights. This is part of the broader objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Africa Agenda 2063.

© UNICEF/UNI517362/Sujan

---

36 UNFPA East and Southern Africa, 'What is the SADC Model Law all About?', 2021, https://esaro.unfpa.org/en/publications/what-sadc-model-law-all-about#:~:text=The%20SADC%20Model%20Law%20provides,states%20to%20end%20child%20marriage

Table 12: Number of policies or legal instruments addressing child marriage drafted, proposed or adopted at national and subnational level with Global Programme support (cumulative)

Country	Indicator 3111: Number of policies or legal instruments addressing child marriage drafted, proposed, or adopted at national and sub-national level with Global Programme support (Cumulative).										
	2019 Results	2020 Results	2021 Results	2022 Results	2023					Phase II (2020-2023) consolidated results	
					Targets	Results	Drafted	Proposed	Adopted	Targets	Results
Bangladesh	2		1	2	5	2	1	0	1	5	2
Burkina Faso	2	1	2	4	6	4	0	3	1	6	4
Ethiopia	2		2	2	4	7	3	3	1	4	7
Ghana	0	1	1	2	2	2	1	0	1	2	2
India	0	4	49	58	62	70	37	12	21	62	70
Mozambique	4	2	2	3	4	6	2	3	1	4	6
Nepal	0	0	0	9	2	4	3	0	1	2	4
Niger	0	0	1	3	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
Sierra Leone	6	NA	1	14	7	7	0	3	4	7	7
Uganda	2	0	1	24	9	10	5	2	3	9	10
Yemen	0	NA	NA	NA	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
Zambia	2	1	5	5	5	8	1	1	6	5	8
Total	**20**	**9**	**63**	**126**	**108**	**122**	**55**	**27**	**40**	**108**	**122**

The collaborative support to the African Union Campaign (Phase II) to End Child Marriage has held members accountable for progress towards SDG 5.3, with laws amended to restrict child marriages in Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Zambia.

The post-monitoring missions, supporting the African Union Goodwill Ambassador and African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) Special Rapporteur, have spurred action and accountability to eliminate child marriage and FGM in 14 targeted countries (Senegal, Niger, Mauritania, Mozambique, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Zambia, South Africa, Seychelles, Madagascar, Kenya, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo). In Zambia, the mission addressed the alignment of the minimum age of marriage for girls to continental and international standards, leading to the introduction of an amendment bill to Parliament.

Table 13: Number of subnational plans with evidence-informed interventions to address child marriage

Country	Indicator 3121: Number of sub-national plans with evidence informed interventions to address child marriage			
	National Plan of Action	2021 subnational action plans	2022 subnational action plans	2023 subnational action plans
Bangladesh	Costed	0	0	4
Burkina Faso	Costed and financed	45	45	45
Ethiopia	Costed and financed	11	11	10
Ghana	Costed and financed	35	35	86
India	Costed and financed	10	12	12
Mozambique	Renewing but interventions funded	6	10	10
Nepal	costed	2	9	26
Niger	Costed	0	0	0
Sierra Leone	Costed and financed			16
Uganda	Costed and financed	15	15	24
Yemen	NA	NA	NA	NA
Zambia	Costed and financed	2	6	6
Total		**126**	**143**	**239**

Through the advocacy and technical support provided by the Global Programme, government funding for national action plans aimed at ending child marriage has been secured in 8 of the 12 focus countries of the Global Programme.

Moreover, global advocacy initiatives have amplified the number of countries with such plans, escalating from 7 in 2018 to a current total of 33. This demonstrates the significant strides made in accelerating action to end child marriage.

© UNICEF/UNI541205/Boman

3.6. Building a new generation of data and evidence

The 2023 Phase II evaluation revealed that the Global Programme has produced significant evidence on effective strategies to end child marriage, especially during COVID-19. This evidence has informed understanding, advocacy, policy, and strategic direction. The Programme has boosted investment in research partnerships at global and regional levels to identify and fill evidence gaps, produce new evidence, and build research capacity at the country level. Despite these advancements,

gaps in evidence remain at the country level, indicating a need for continued investment.

The Global Programme continued to **expand investments in research and the development of mechanisms for generating and applying high-quality data and evidence**. In 2023, the Global Programme produced 31 research and evidence products, all aimed at fostering evidence-based programming and policies to end child marriage.

Table 14: Number of evidence and knowledge products generated that focus on what works to end child marriage (cumulative)

Country	Indicator 3211: Number of generated evidence and knowledge that focus on what works to end child marriage (cumulative)										
	2019 Results	2020 Results	2021 Results	2022 Results	2023					Phase II (2020-2023) consolidated results	
					Targets	Results	Drafted	Proposed	Adopted	Targets	Results
Bangladesh	4	4	9	11	12	12	12	12	1	5	2
Burkina Faso	1	1	2	4	7	5	7	5	1	6	4
Ethiopia	3	0	5	6	10	15	10	15	1	4	7
Ghana	2	0	3	5	10	9	10	9	1	2	2
India		8	11	20	32	25	32	25	21	62	70
Mozambique	NA	NA	2	7	5	11	5	11	1	4	6
Nepal			NA	1	2	3	2	3	1	2	4
Niger	2	1	NA	1	2	1	2	1	0	1	1
Sierra Leone	2	0	1	3	5	6	5	6	4	7	7
Uganda	NA	NA	NA	3	3	3	3	3	3	9	10
Yemen			1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Zambia	1	NA	0	1	4	3	4	3	6	5	8
Total	**15**	**14**	**21**	**63**	**93**	**94**	**93**	**94**	**40**	**108**	**122**

In partnership with the African Union, the Global Programme has reinforced journalism practices that promote accountability in the elimination of harmful practices through capacity-building of 90 frontline journalists and media scholars from various African countries. A total of 23 media pieces have been produced across Uganda, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Somalia and Zambia. These pieces highlight issues such as child marriage, FGM and adolescent pregnancies, amplifying the dissemination and general communication about the effects of these harmful practices on individuals and society at large.

The Programme's contribution to the analysis and synthesis of global evidence on effective interventions was complemented by the launch of a dedicated child marriage data portal. In addition, through the partnership with Girls Not Brides, the Programme held four CRANK research meetings, fostering a deeper understanding of the issue. Through 12 regional convenings and the publication of 3 journal articles, the Global Programme also increased access to contextualized evidence on successful strategies to end child marriage.

© UNICEF/UNI511462/Awad

3.7. Challenges

Pushback against gender equality: Efforts to end child marriage are hindered by resistance to women's and children's rights and gender equality. Countries like Bangladesh, Ghana, India, Uganda, Yemen and Zambia have faced a backlash on issues related to child marriage, gender equality and comprehensive sexuality education. To counter this challenge, the use of social and community listening is being leveraged to monitor discourse and naratives and identify places that are experiencing pushback on gender equality, and voices that drive this pushback. In addition, the Global Programme is investing in a mapping of countries at greater risk of pushback, as well as in partnerships with faith leaders through the global network Religions for Peace to promote inter-faith dialogue on harmful practices and build support among faith leaders for ending child marriage. In addition, UN agencies working on CSE are strategizing among technical and communication experts to prevent and mitigate pushback against SRHR.

Legislation and policy: Despite legislative improvements, lack of law enforcement and awareness remain obstacles. Some countries also face obstacles in reforming laws related to child marriage and others face the challenges of legal reforms being used to create barriers for

girls' access to services or bodily autonomy. The Global Programme plans to invest in community-level buy-in of laws and policies, so that laws protecting girls are not seen exclusively as a top-down mechanism but also a bottom-up movement that communities sustain for the well-being of adolescent girls.

Public finance: Most countries are facing challenges in funding public services and investing adequately in programmes to end child marriage. Weak coordination and limited resources in government structures further impede programme effectiveness.

Scaling up: Limited fiscal space for public financing and insufficient funding for human resources capacity hinder programme expansion at the national and subnational levels. For instance, in Bangladesh, strengthening the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs' leadership and capacity is crucial for programme expansion. In Sierra Leone, the positive parenting programme could reduce harmful practices, but its scalability remains a challenge. Furthermore, scaling up multifaceted programmes for adolescent girls can compromise quality and requires sustained revisions of curricula over time.[37] The human-centred approaches being

---

37 BRAC and UNFPA, Adolescent Empowerment at Scale: Successes and challenges of an evidence-based approach to young women's programming in Africa, 2023, www.unfpa.org/publications/adolescent-empowerment-scale-successes-and-challenges-evidence-based-approach-young

integrated in the Global Programme allow for co-creation and implementation, which in turn allows for scaling up and uptake by communities.

Humanitarian emergencies: Protracted conflicts prioritize lifesaving interventions, and the lack of recognition of the harmful effects of child marriage makes it hard to advocate for integrating child marriage as a lifesaving strategy. Countries in the Middle East and North Africa/Arab States, amid protracted conflicts, prioritize lifesaving needs over efforts to prevent child marriage. In Burkina Faso, the ongoing security crisis has led to school closures and hindered access to prevention services and data collection. The crisis also impacts household economics, reducing male participation in community dialogues. In Ethiopia, conflict and drought have increased school drop-out due to displacement and household insecurity. Continued support for education is crucial to address these challenges.

Economic opportunities for adolescents: All Programme countries have limited professional training and job opportunities for adolescents. Limited resources prevent the scale-up of economic empowerment projects for adolescents in some countries.

Digital divide: Digital divide exists along rural-urban, rich-poor, educated-less educated, and gender lines in all countries. Adolescents in remote areas struggle to use mobile apps due to poor connectivity and electricity, poor digital literacy, limited awareness of digital opportunities, and high costs of mobile data and devices.

Convergence: Mixed results were seen in ensuring convergence across agencies, government departments and implementing partners. Geographic convergence at the subnational level was particularly challenging, especially in hard-to-reach areas with limited services. Institutional factors such as pre-existing arrangements with governments and implementing partners, ongoing programmes, and resource constraints made achieving geographic convergence difficult.

Coordination: Some countries, particularly at the subnational level, faced coordination challenges with parallel coordination mechanisms and siloed implementation. For example, in Bangladesh and Mozambique, parallel coordination mechanisms for issues like gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health and rights, HIV/AIDS, and child protection posed challenges to engagement in interventions for ending child marriage.

Generational shifts in youth organizations: Youth-led organizations are dynamic in essence; most youth organizations experience both benefits and challenges from generational shifts in leadership. This could affect the capacity of the organizations to sustain partnerships, priorities and political presence in areas relevant to ending child marriage.

© UNICEF/UNI522936/Rooftop Productions

© UNICEF/UNI502080/Elfatih

3.8. Lessons learned

Importance of local context: Contextualization of programming by adapting the global theory of change to the national context, as well as looking at key approaches and interventions through a culturally relevant perspective, is required to ensure the acceptability and sustainability of the interventions to end child marriage. The Co-Creation Playbook is a key intervention for localization. It enables local partners and communities to jointly create relevant solutions. The playbook uses a 'listen-first' approach and participatory activities to understand community motivations and values. This information is then used to co-develop and prototype localized solutions, ensuring effective, sustainable and community-accepted interventions.

Gender-transformative programming requires addressing internal biases: An understanding of what gender-transformative programming means is needed to ensure its implementation at national and subnational levels. The internal gender biases of staff and implementing partners need to be addressed through values clarification methodologies to ensure an enabling environment and sustainable change. To address

the internal biases, the Global Programme has developed a values clarification training that is being implmented with country offices.

Ensuring that social and behaviour change interventions are focused on key stakeholders that can really drive change: To shift social and gender norms, focus initially on power-holders, the status quo maintainers. Activities and messages should highlight the collective advantages of girl empowerment and gender equality. Positive deviant community and faith leaders can introduce new narratives for young women. Community engagement in these narratives, via dialogues and various media, can gradually alter norms. This also involves community support for laws vital to protecting young girls.

Implementing laws and policies: Laws and policies aimed at ending child marriage should not be promoted as stand-alone interventions. Instead, they should be part of a comprehensive strategy. Implementing these laws can lead to unintended consequences if they do not adhere to human rights standards. It's important to consider the

three ages of consent – for sexual relationships, marriage, and access to services – in a holistic manner. Failing to do so could undermine the effectiveness of these laws and policies.

Reaching the most marginalized: Evidence supports the effectiveness of reaching girls with multicomponent interventions (e.g., life skills, CSE, ASRH services and supplies, education). However, implementing different interventions in parallel does not ensure that all these interventions reach and benefit the most at-risk girls. Therefore, intentional and targeted interventions are needed to reach the most marginalized. The Global Programme's partnerships have led to the creation of a toolkit to address discrimination and exclusion of children and youth with disabilities. This toolkit integrates approaches into programming that aim to reduce the stigma faced by these children, enhancing their chances of participating in programme activities and benefiting from services.

Addressing intersectional discrimination: It is crucial to address intersectional forms of discrimination and challenge power relations to empower adolescent girls and reduce their vulnerability to child marriage.

Jointness and convergence of strategies: As a joint programme, it is necessary to converge intervention strategies and approaches in the same locations for the benefit of the same adolescent girls facing multiple intersectional needs by maximizing the comparative advantage of each agency.

Resource assessment for investments: In low-resource contexts, the Programme may need to evaluate which combination of interventions yields the best results in empowering girls and ending child marriage.

Partnering with youth-led and women-led organizations: Partnerships and engagement with youth- and women-led organizations/feminist coalitions fosters consensus-building, advocacy and trust to end child marriage. Civil society organizations are critical to ensure the participation of women, girls and young people in decision-making as well as to promote social accountability and defend their human rights.

Drawing on the results, achievements and challenges faced, there are a number of lessons learned that we envision as calls to action or guidelines for the work ahead. These lessons learned have guided the design and development of the Global Programme's Phase III, and are reflected in the Programme Document, the Theory of Change and Annual Workplans for Phase III.

© UNICEF/UNI517372/Sujan

3.9. Innovative approaches

Programme innovations and adaptations: The Global Programme evolved with a focus on gender-transformative approaches and inclusivity. A remarkable innovation was the creation of the Gender-Transformative Accelerator Tool to facilitate gender analysis and strategic planning. Adjustments were made based on research and the latest evidence available. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital technologies and programme experimentation. Humanitarian crises and the backlash against gender equality efforts necessitated nimble and creative approaches. Humanitarian crises in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and in northern Mozambique forced child marriage programmes to adapt to reach crisis-affected populations.

Digital technologies and child marriage: Technology-based interventions are increasingly important in addressing child marriage in programme countries. The COVID-19 pandemic fast-tracked the shift to digital technologies. Both digital and in-person approaches are needed, requiring a blend of digital technologies with in-person engagement. The Global Programme developed technical guidance on digital and remote approaches during Phase II and assessed the maturity of some digital approaches across countries.[38]

Business continuity: The Global Programme has been exploring tools to support scale-up of reach to targeted beneficiaries and ensure service delivery during crises. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of resilience and programme continuity. Child helplines played a crucial role during the pandemic. The education sector underwent major upheavals due to school closures.

Partnerships with social protection: Social protection and safety net programmes can significantly impact the poverty drivers of child marriage. In many countries, the Global Programme has begun to invest in partnerships, research, and advocacy to harness the social protection sectors in countries with high rates of child marriage.

Adapting to the polycrisis: Countries are adapting their programmes to respond to complex emergencies. The Global Programme expanded community-based programmes to reduce risks of violence and provide recovery services. In Burkina Faso, the Global Programme adapted by shifting implementation to areas where there were high concentrations of displaced people.

Contextualization: The Global Programme supported countries with high rates of child marriage to further contextualize their strategies. This showed the need for evidence-driven and granular approaches adapted to specific contexts to reach the most marginalized girls.

---

38 UNICEF, Review of technology-based interventions to address child marriage and female genital mutilation, 2023, www.unicef.org/documents/review-technology-based-interventions-address-child-marriage-and-female-genital

3.10. Priorities for the way forward

Building on the past eight years of programming, the Global Programme's Phase III strategy will invest in three mutually reinforcing focus areas that correspond to the three key challenges: polycrisis and megatrends, pushback against gender equality, and the slow decline in child marriage. Together, these investments aim to accelerate efforts to end child marriage and promote gender equality by:

Promoting gender equality and the empowerment of girls

- **Sustain and scale up intensive support interventions for adolescent girls' empowerment** by implementing evidence-based and gender-transformative targeted life skills interventions and comprehensive sexuality education, particularly in non-formal settings.
- **Contextualize social and behaviour change to promote gender-transformative change across all levels of the socio-ecological model** rather than focusing only on individuals and the community level to create an enabling environment for girls' empowerment.
- **Work with boys and young men to promote positive masculinities** to be strengthened and systematized.
- **Mobilize adolescent girls, women and young people as changemakers**.
- **Broaden global and regional partnerships for gender equality** at global, regional and national levels.

Adapting to the polycrisis and megatrends of the twenty-first century

- **Ensure crisis-adaptive programming.**
- **Build rapid cycles of monitoring, evaluation, learning and adaptation.**

Accelerating results and leveraging partnerships and resources

- **Invest in systems and services at scale.**
- **Gender-responsive social protection** tackles two of the main drivers of child marriage.
- **Sexual and reproductive health and rights** are another priority area for leveraging existing systems and strategies to accelerate results related to the prevention of adolescent pregnancies and child marriage.
- **Leverage public finance and strengthen government accountability.**
- **Leverage technological innovations for large-scale results.**

Advancing the research and evidence agenda

- Promote an inclusive and participatory process for a Global South-led evidence agenda.
- Strengthen skills and awareness on the 'what and how' of evidence uptake and dissemination.
- Ethical communication – greater awareness of and response to macro-level political factors that affect the evidence ecosystem and more careful communication of evidence to mitigate wrong use (connected to pushback).

© UNICEF/UNI475248/Krämer

CHAPTER 4:

PROGRAMME GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

© UNICEF/UNI564765/Awad

The Global Programme's significant success lies in its catalytic effect at all levels, extending its reach through joint programming, partnerships, advocacy and knowledge-sharing by building on the expertise and comparative advantage of UNICEF and UNFPA. The Global Programme leveraged evidence, tools and knowledge to inform understanding, raise awareness and advocate for ending child marriage. According to the Evaluation of Phase II, the elimination of child marriage has become a priority in the country programme documents (CPDs) of all Global Programme countries and two thirds of non-Global Programme countries, indicating the catalytic effect of the Global Programme.

© UNICEF/UNI441163/Andriantsoarana

4.1. Joint programming, implementation and advocacy

Convergence: The Global Programme addresses the multifaceted needs of at-risk girls through three main pillars: individuals and communities; systems and services; and policies and data, while striving for geographic and thematic convergence. Currently, 59 per cent of programme areas have joint action, up from 48 per cent in 2022. In Mozambique, the Global Programme collaborated with UNESCO and WFP to provide life skills education and access to a basic package of prevention and protection services. In Zambia, the Global Programme expanded multisectoral plans at the district level through joint planning, monitoring and convergence between education, health and social welfare sectors.

Coordination and jointness: Coordination through joint programming, monitoring and evaluation, joint assessments and research has led to efficiencies, particularly when both agencies are working in the same geographical areas. Currently, 57 per cent of activities are jointly implemented with effective coordination between agencies, up from 53 per cent in 2022. The Global Programme has also fostered

multisectoral partnering and coordination functions with key national stakeholders. In Nepal, an inter-agency coordination mechanism serves as a platform for programmatic updates and opportunities to foster a cohesive approach to ending child marriage and other harmful practices, as well as on adolescents' issues. In Niger, the Platform to End Child Marriage brings together civil society, United Nations agencies and donors to promote girls' rights; the platform meets monthly to discuss ongoing interventions.

Advocacy: Global events and convenings play a crucial role in advancing gender equality and ending child marriage. In 2023, the Global Programme implemented a communications strategy to raise awareness and promote online engagement and advocacy during in alignment with the CSW theme and International Women's Day 'Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls'. On the margins of the United Nations

General Assembly session in 2023, the Global Programme contributed to a high-level side event that was co-convened by Canada, Zambia and the Global Programme with a focus on data. The Global Programme organized special events during key international advocacy days, including the Day of the African Child, 16 Days of Activism against GBV, and the International Day of the Girl.

On the International Day of the Girl Child in 2023, the Global Programme launched the campaign **Life, Interrupted**, which featured print ads that tell the stories of three girls from Yemen, Uganda and India, to raise awareness of child marriage and the need for support from governments, the private and public sector, and people around the world.[39]

The Global Programme also mobilized the political will of Member States to publish the *Lancet* article 'Towards a world with no child marriage: four countries pledge action', a clarion call to end child marriage.

© UNICEF/UNI517358/Sujan

39 Mediashotz. 'Life Interrupted: UN launches campaign to end girl child marriage', 2023, https://mediashotz.co.uk/life-interrupted-un-launches-campaign-to-end-girl-child-marriage/

© UNICEF/UNI439856/Lehn

4.2. Implementing partners

The 2023 Phase II evaluation highlighted the Global Programme's success in catalysing efforts at all levels to end child marriage. This was achieved through joint programming, partnerships, advocacy and knowledge-sharing. The Global Programme worked with other initiatives, expanding reach, coverage and funding. It used evidence and tools to raise awareness and inform advocacy and programming. The Global Programme capitalized on the SDG agenda's momentum, which prioritized eliminating harmful practices, including child marriage. Since 2015, ending child marriage has been a priority in United Nations agencies' country programmes. The Global Programme fostered partnerships with CSOs, aiding their national expansion. All countries established strong partnerships with governments and CSOs, and to a lesser extent, feminist organizations, and the private sector. However, mobilizing new CSOs was a challenge in Phase II due to compound factors including the shrinking of civic space,[40] the limited capacity, including financial management risks, and lack of stability exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, humanitarian emergencies and political crises.

The Global Programme follows a human rights-based approach to programming – therefore, it works with a range of partners including governments as duty bearers through government initiatives, systems and platforms to promote gender equality and end child marriage; and with academics and civil society organizations as political actors that can contribute to advocacy, accountability and transparency at local, national, regional and global levels. The Global Programme collaborates with local and international civil society organizations and academia as implementing partners to achieve results on the ground. In 2023, the Global Programme had a total of 188 local CSOs, 43 international CSOs and 16 institutions from academia as implementing partners.

Types of Local CSOs	Number
Disability rights groups	2
Groups working on diversity issues	24
Groups working on religious freedom	3
Minority people's groups	6
Women-led organizations	74
Youth-led organizations	79
Total	**188**

40 CIVICUS, Monitor: Tracking civic space, https://monitor.civicus.org/

© UNICEF/UNI577144/Fauvrelle

4.3. Visibility and communication

During Phase II, the Global Programme significantly enhanced its visibility and communication efforts at global, regional and country levels. This strategic expansion aimed to raise awareness about the need to end child marriage and to highlight the Programme's efforts. Key initiatives included media engagement, event organization, and leveraging social media platforms to inspire action and cultivate allies, including current and prospective donors.

Web presence: From 2020 to 2023, the Global Programme saw a significant increase in website engagement. Page views surged from 10,489 to 166,861, reflecting heightened interest in the Programme. The number of unique visitors also increased dramatically, from 9,085 in 2020 to 142,341 in 2023, indicating that the website was reaching a broader audience. The average time spent on the page more than doubled from 3:59 minutes to 6:48 minutes, suggesting deeper engagement over time. These metrics collectively indicate growing awareness and interest in the Programme. The Programme's commitment to inclusivity and accessibility is highlighted by its multilingual page (English, French, Spanish, Arabic and Chinese) on the Global Programme domain, catering to a global audience. Furthermore, the Programme's website consistently attracted an annual audience of approximately 20,000, with an average of 15,000 unique page viewers, emphasizing its impact and reach. These data underscore the growing global engagement with the Programme's efforts to end child marriage.

Social media expansion: During Phase II, the Programme used online platforms to expand its reach, leading to a significant increase in social media followers. Twitter followers grew by 47 per cent in 2020, while Instagram followers saw a 115 per cent rise. The Programme's official Twitter (now X) and Instagram accounts saw substantial growth in 2023, with follower counts increasing by 9.03 per cent and 11.84 per cent, and content impressions by 45.25 per cent and 19.03 per cent, respectively. The 'Coping with COVID-19' video series has attracted 2.59 million impressions and 1.1 million video views, totalling 5.4 billion minutes watched. These data underscore the Programme's effective use of social media to broaden its reach and engagement.

Innovative campaigns and series:

- **Bodyright Campaign (2021)**: Focused on bodily autonomy and technology-facilitated gender-based violence (GBV), this campaign reached an estimated 1.2 billion people globally, with high-profile endorsements from celebrities and extensive media coverage.[41]
- **Vaillante Miniseries (2021–2022)**: This fictional series on child marriage reached over 63,000 web visitors from 101 countries and achieved significant social media engagement, with over 17.2 million people reached. The series was screened at film festivals and on platforms like Canal+ and streaming services globally.
- **Life, interrupted (2023)**:[42] Launched on the International Day of the Girl Child by the

---

41 UNFPA, A new copyright for the human body, Bodyright, https://www.unfpa.org/bodyright

42 Mediashotz, 'Life Interrupted: UN launches campaign to end girl child marriage', 2023; Moritz Maus, UNICEF – Life, Interrupted, https://moritzmaus.com/unicef-life-interrupted

Global Programme, highlighted the impact of child marriage through the stories of Aisha from Yemen, Dembe from Uganda and Sonakhi from India, who resisted early marriage to pursue their dreams of becoming an artist, nurse and teacher respectively. The campaign, amplified during 16 days of activism in 2023 via social media and partnerships with United Nations agencies, the Middle East and Northern Africa Regional Action Forum to End Child Marriage and CSOs, garnered 10,359 views, emphasizing the need for collective global action to end child marriage.

4.4. Knowledge management and exchange

The Global Programme increased access to contextualized evidence on successful strategies to end child marriage. In 2023, the Programme published 9 technical notes and made a total of 190 publications available globally in English, French, Spanish, Arabic and Chinese. Over this period, the global newsletter further expanded its reach, with 1,098 subscribers in 113 countries by 2023 (see Figure 3). This year also saw an increase in newsletter and research digest open rates from 25 per cent to 30 per cent.

Figure 3: Global newsletter recipients' geographical spread

Map disclaimer: The designations employed and the presentation of material in maps do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNFPA or UNICEF concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

In 2023, the Global Programme conducted 17 webinars on various topics. These included onboarding calls, clinics on child marriage data profiles, discussions on harmful practices, resolutions on CEFM and FGM, a global child marriage data launch, a webinar on tech-based interventions for child marriage and FGM, interactive data conversation clinics, SBC toolbox workshops in English and French, and a comprehensive 5-day Phase III workshop. The aim was to share knowledge, build capacity, and drive initiatives to end child marriage and harmful practices globally.

4.5 Impact beyond the Global Programme

Since its inception, the Global Programme has been expanding its influence beyond the initial 12 countries, reaching across various regions. By 2023, the Programme had extended its support – be it technical, programmatic, political, or knowledge-sharing – to a total of 44 countries worldwide. These countries include Afghanistan, Angola, Belize, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Burundi, Chad, Colombia, Comoros, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Eswatini, Guinea, Guatemala, Haiti, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Laos, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestine, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. This marks a significant increase in the Global Programme's influence and impact on ending child marriage globally (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Map of countries supported beyond the core Global Programme countries
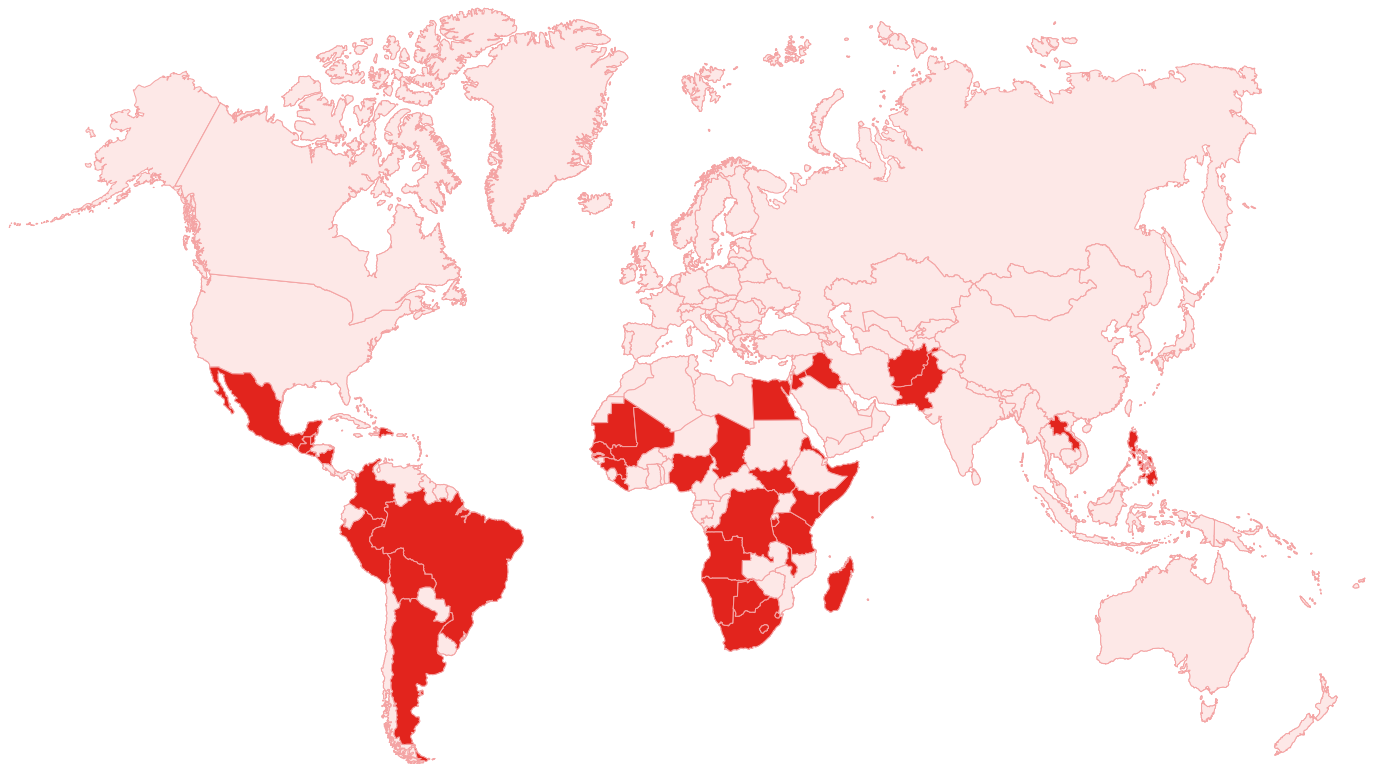
Map disclaimer: The designations employed and the presentation of material in maps do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNFPA or UNICEF concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

4.6 Resource mobilization and expenditure

TRENDS IN CHILD MARRIAGE AND PROGRAMMING CONTEXT

During Phase II, the Global Programme received just over US$121 million in donor contributions, including balances carried forward from funds contributed towards the end of Phase I. Annual contributions peaked in 2020 and 2021 and then declined in the two following years. The biggest contributions were from the Netherlands, Norway and Canada. The United States became the newest donor to the Global Programme and Zonta International remains the only private sector donor.

Table 15: Contributions received by the Global Programme in Phase II by year (in US$)

Donor	Total contributions received to Global Programme valid in Phase II in US$	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Belgium	9,132,616	4,483,325	2,355,713	2,293,578	-	-
Canada	23,398,560	3,793,627	3,782,148	15,822,785	-	-
European Commission	724,638	724,638	-	-	-	-
European Union through Spotlight Initiative	7,194,000	-	2,000,000	1,416,000	700,425	3,077,575
Italy	2,238,520	-	597,372	596,659	517,063	527,426
Netherlands	33,556,946	7,700,770	8,225,617	8,323,424	9,307,135	-
Norway	32,451,329	-	13,870,574	6,782,384	7,145,044	4,653,327
United Kingdom	8,258,832	-	-	-	3,926,702	4,332,130
United States	588,000	-	-	-	-	588,000
Zonta International	4,053,000	-	1,980,000	1,485,000	588,000	
Total	**121,596,441**	**16,702,360**	**32,811,424**	**36,719,830**	**22,184,369**	**13,178,458**

PHASE II PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE

Annual expenditures increased steadily over the four years of Phase II. Community-level expenditures continued to make up more than half of all expenditures (outcomes 1100 and 1200). Expenditures for health, education and protection services (outcome 2100) fluctuated, but the Programme showed an increase in expenditures for social protection and poverty reduction, albeit from a very low level (outcome 2200). Expenditures increased for legislative, policy and budget advocacy (outcome 3100) and decreased for data, research and evidence (outcome 3200).

© UNICEF/UNI439823/Lehn

Figure 5: Phase II Global Programme expenditures by year and outcome area
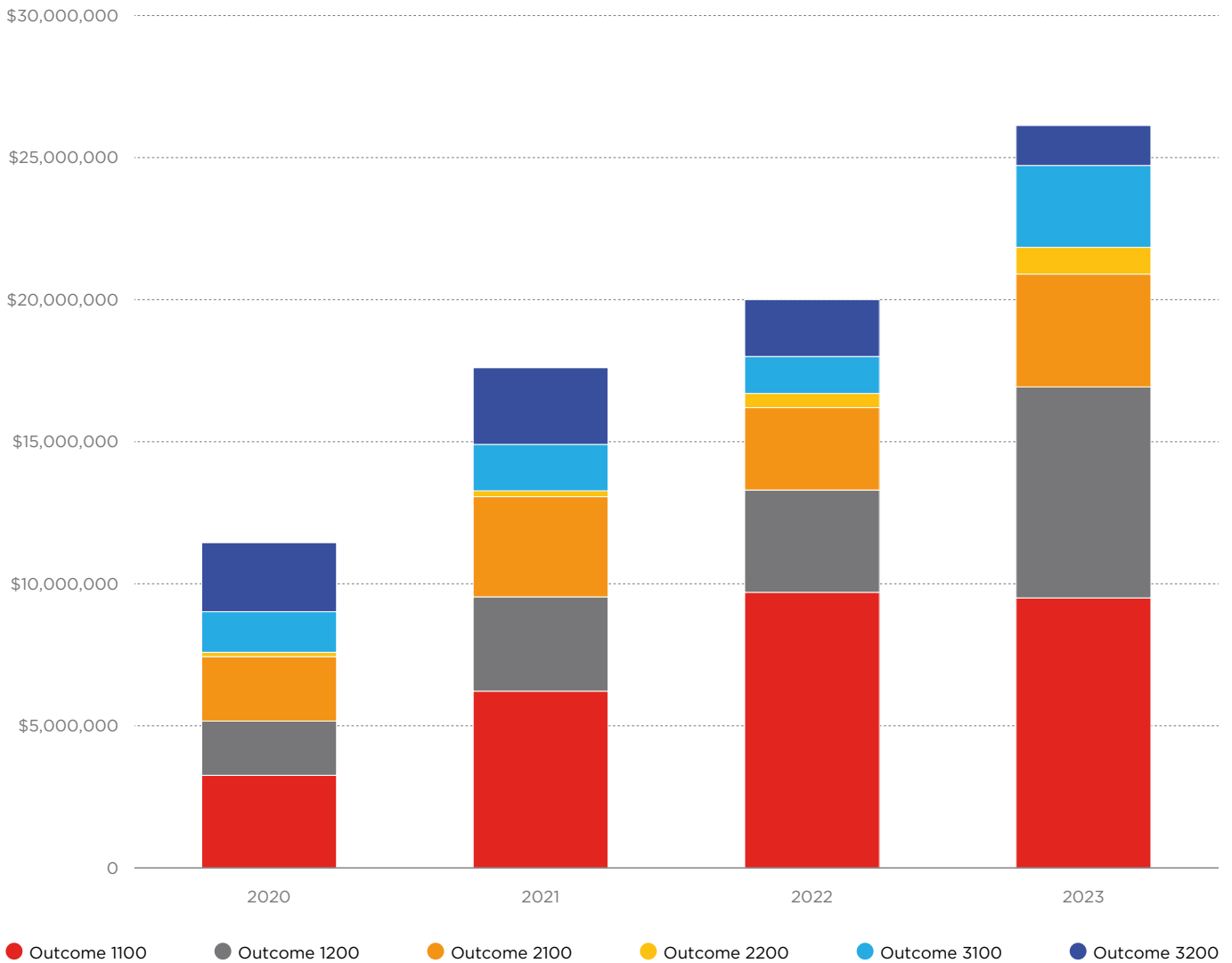
Figure 6: Phase II Global Programme expenditures by outcome area

Outcome 1200
16,2 million

Outcome 2200
1,8 million

Outcome 3200
8,5 million

Outcome 1100
28,7 million

Outcome 2100
12,7 million

Outcome 3100
7,2 million
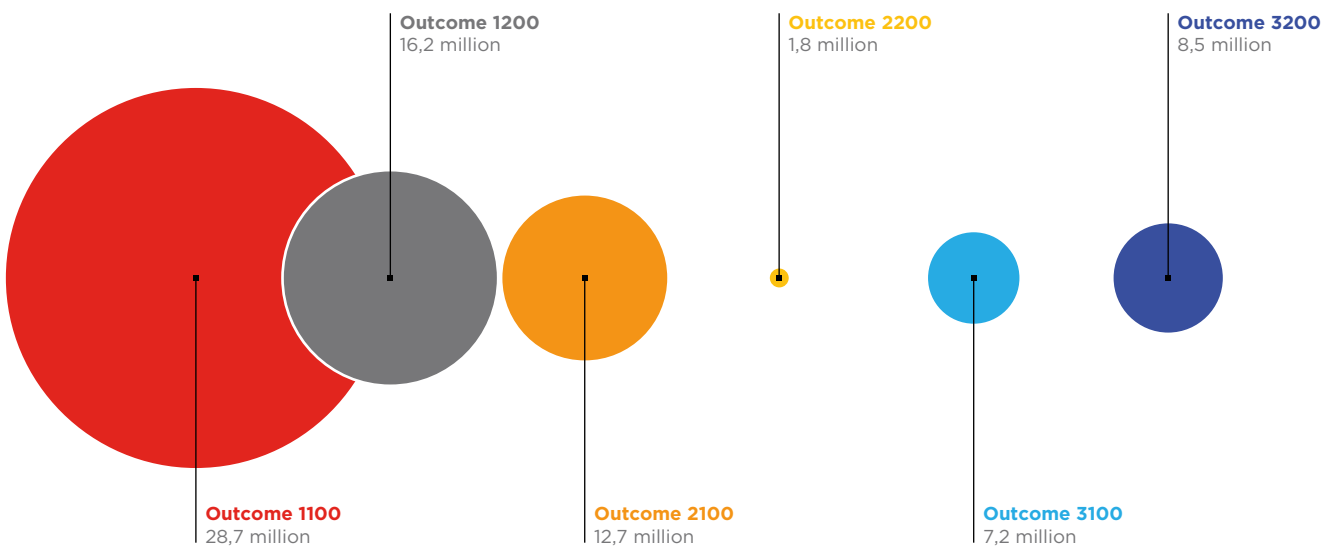
Figure 7: Expenditure trends by outcome area in Phase II of the Global Programme

	OUTCOME 1100	OUTCOME 1200	OUTCOME 2100	OUTCOME 2200	OUTCOME 3100	OUTCOME 3200
2020	3,3 million	1,9 million	2,3 million	0,1 million	1,4 million	2,4 million
2021	6,2 million	3,3 million	3,5 million	0,2 million	1,4 million	2,7 million
2022	9,7 million	3,6 million	2,9 million	0,5 million	1,3 million	2 million
2023	9,5 million	7,4 million	4 million	0,9 million	2,8 million	1,4 million

Table 16: Allocation, expenditures, and expenditure rate for Phase II (2020–2023) (in US$)

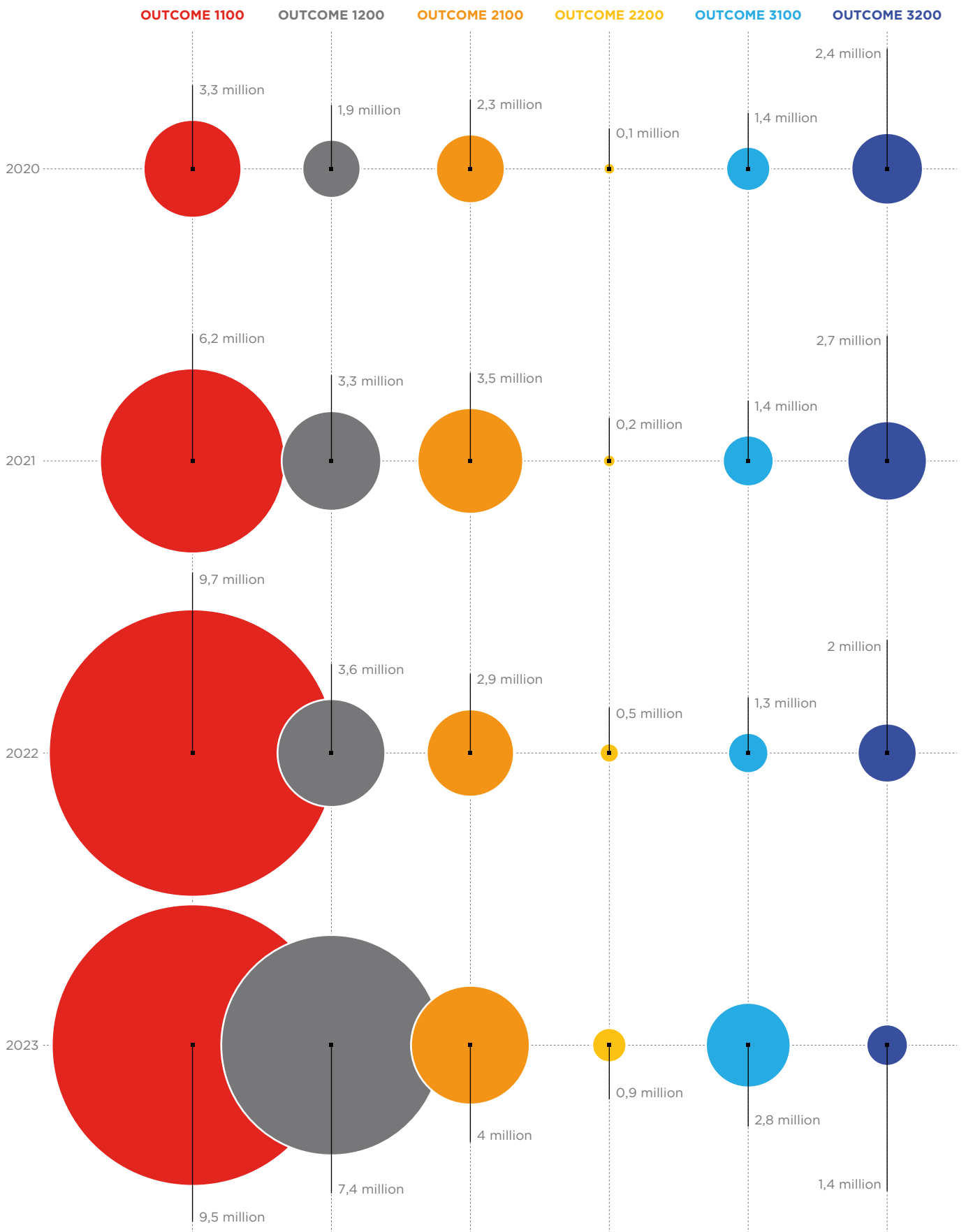| BUSINESS UNIT	PHASE II TOTAL			UNFPA			UNICEF		
	Allocation	Expenditure	Exp rate	Allocation	Expenditure	Exp rate	Allocation	Expenditure	Exp rate
Bangladesh	10,652,500	11,773,279	111%	4,602,500	4,674,775	102%	6,050,000	7,098,504	117%
Burkina Faso	6,306,250	6,045,371	96%	2,506,250	2,441,606	97%	3,800,000	3,603,766	95%
Ethiopia	10,352,500	10,874,457	105%	3,752,500	4,015,969	107%	6,600,000	6,858,487	104%
Ghana	5,726,250	5,922,042	103%	2,736,250	2,682,623	98%	2,990,000	3,239,419	108%
India	10,902,500	11,227,796	103%	3,902,500	4,019,569	103%	7,000,000	7,208,227	103%
Mozambique	4,461,250	4,739,014	106%	2,261,250	2,331,333	103%	2,200,000	2,407,681	109%
Nepal	4,986,250	5,127,554	103%	2,436,250	2,374,204	97%	2,550,000	2,753,350	108%
Niger	5,834,663	5,868,311	101%	2,681,582	2,631,579	98%	3,153,081	3,236,731	103%
Sierra Leone	4,656,250	4,854,655	104%	2,026,250	2,118,806	105%	2,630,000	2,735,849	104%
Uganda	5,326,250	5,128,210	96%	2,696,250	2,552,729	95%	2,630,000	2,575,481	98%
Yemen	3,003,750	2,769,395	92%	1,697,500	1,527,795	90%	1,306,250	1,241,599	95%
Zambia	4,786,250	4,505,842	94%	2,616,250	2,031,741	78%	2,170,000	2,474,101	114%
CO Subtotal per agency	**76,994,663**	**78,835,925**	**102%**	**33,915,332**	**33,402,730**	**98%**	**43,079,331**	**45,433,195**	**105%**
Asia-Pacific RO	2,361,235	1,935,220	82%	1,229,985	835,922	68%	1,131,250	1,099,298	97%
Middle East-North Africa RO	2,543,088	1,719,680	68%	1,111,838	760,001	68%	1,431,250	959,679	67%
Eastern and Southern Africa RO	2,832,356	2,216,795	78%	1,109,856	817,334	74%	1,722,500	1,399,461	81%
West and Central Africa RO	2,317,500	1,655,801	71%	886,250	388,382	44%	1,431,250	1,267,420	89%
RO Subtotal per agency	**10,054,179**	**7,527,496**	**75%**	**4,337,929**	**2,801,639**	**65%**	**5,716,250**	**4,725,857**	**83%**
HQ programme budget	6,388,894	3,245,139	51%	3,488,926	1,439,501	41%	2,899,968	1,805,637	62%
Child Monitoring Mechanism	750,000	135,517	-	-	-	-	750,000	135,517	18%
Independent evaluation	600,000	371,193		200,000	95,000	48%	400,000	276,193	69%
Global Programme Support Unit (HR)	6,753,725	5,847,691	87%	2,655,420	2,165,317	82%	4,098,306	3,682,374	90%
HQ Subtotal per agency	**14,492,619**	**9,599,540**	**66%**	**6,344,345**	**3,699,818**	**58%**	**8,148,274**	**5,899,722**	**72%**
Total per agency (programmable)	101,541,461	95,962,943	95%	44,597,606	39,904,170	89%	56,943,855	56,058,773	98%
Indirect costs per agency (7%)	7,107,902	6,716,013	94%	3,121,832	2,791,899	89%	3,986,070	3,924,114	98%
Total	**108,649,363**	**102,678,956**	**95%**	**47,719,439**	**42,696,068**	**89%**	**60,929,925**	**59,982,888**	**98%**

During Phase II, approximately 95 per cent of the allocated funds for the Programme were utilized. However, the COVID-19 pandemic and political uncertainties in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso and Niger posed challenges to programme implementation. Despite these obstacles, countries managed to adapt and continue executing their workplans. Consequently, there were significant unspent balances, leading to reported expenditure rates exceeding 100 per cent.

© UNICEF/UNI532189/Ayene

2023 PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE

In 2023, Bangladesh, Ethiopia and India had the largest programme expenditures among Global Programme countries.

Figure 8: Expenditure by country office and outcome area (in US$ and %)

● Outcome 1100 ● Outcome 1200 ● Outcome 2100 ● Outcome 2200 ● Outcome 3100 ● Outcome 3200

Figure 8: Expenditure by country office and outcome area (in US$ and %)

● Outcome 1100 ● Outcome 1200 ● Outcome 2100 ● Outcome 2200 ● Outcome 3100 ● Outcome 3200
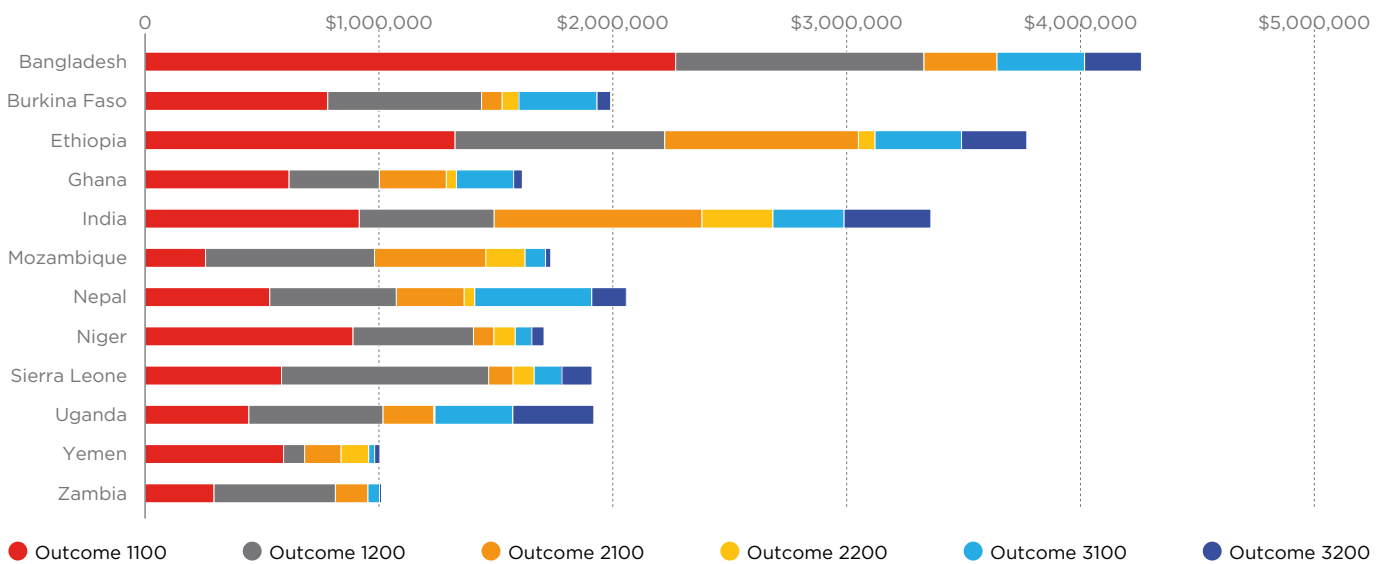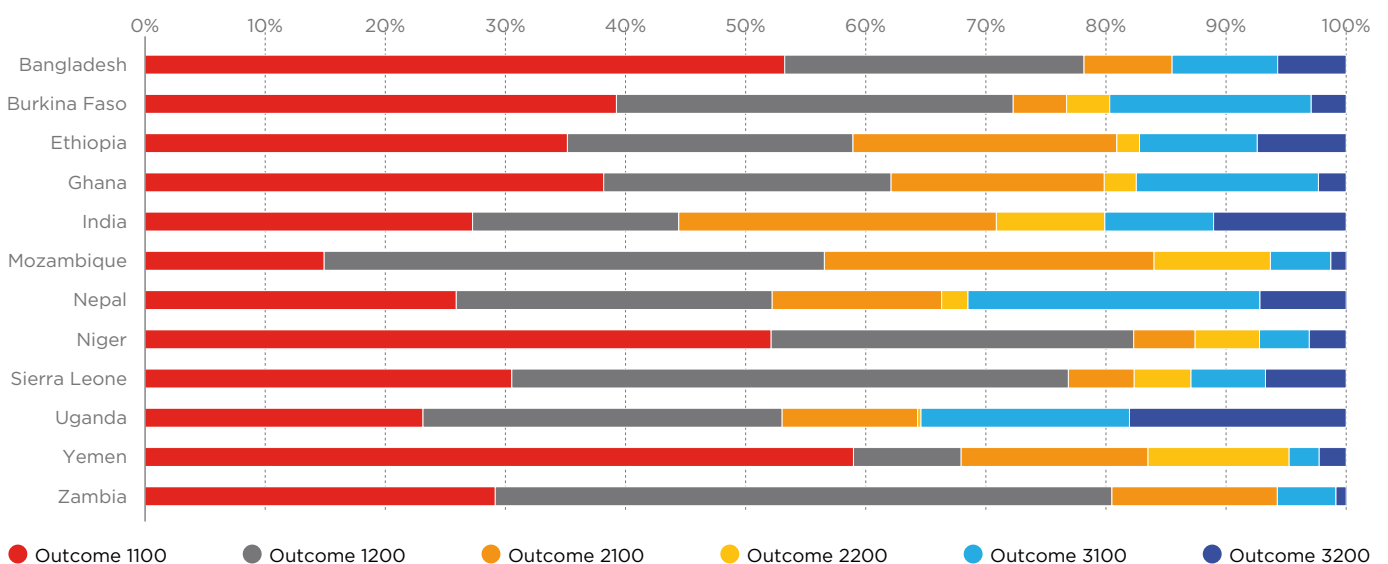
The graph in Figure 9 presents a comparison between allocations and expenditures by country, regional and headquarters offices in 2023. Country and regional expenditures exceeded allocations due to balances carried forward from the COVID-19 period, while headquarters expenditures were lower than allocations.

Figure 9: 2023 expenditures versus allocations by country, regional and headquarters offices (US$)

Figure 10: Phase II expenditures versus allocations by country, regional and headquarters offices (US$)

Table 17: Allocation, expenditures, and expenditure rate for 2023 (in US$)

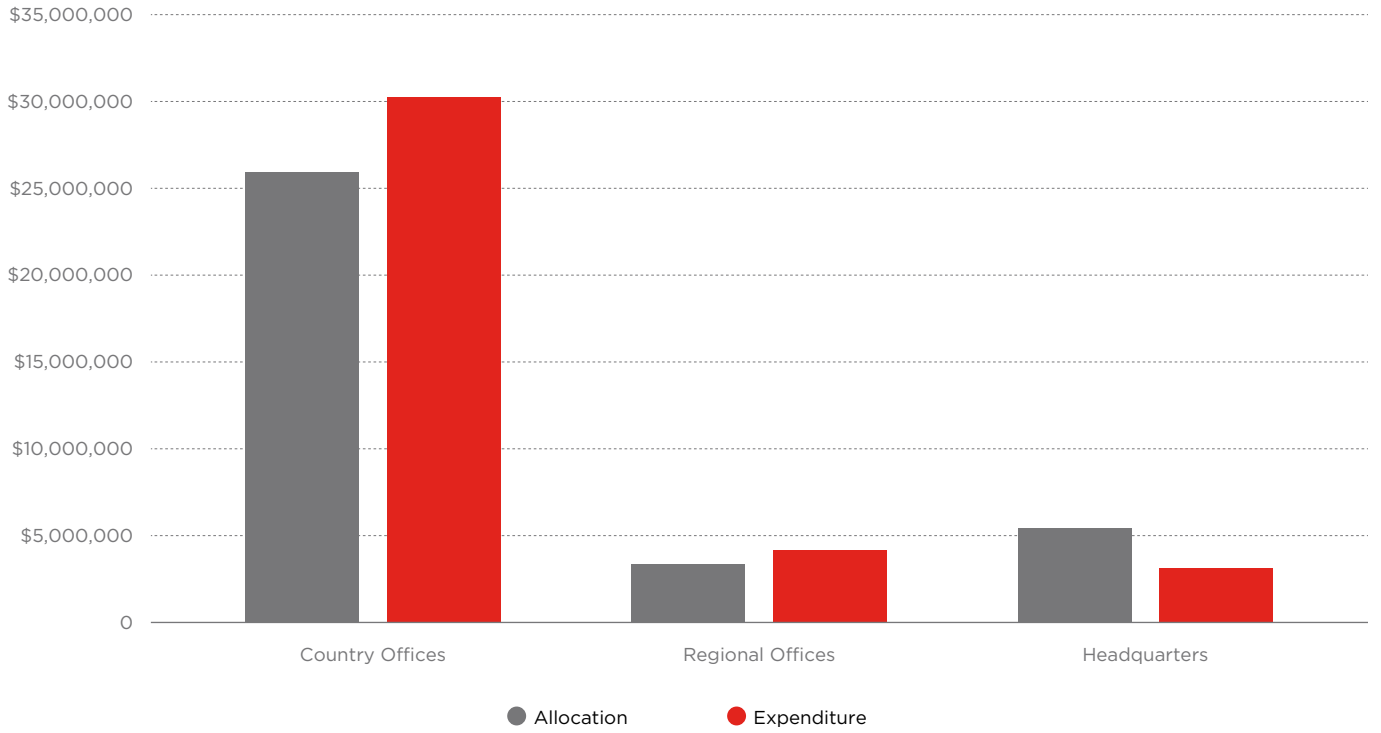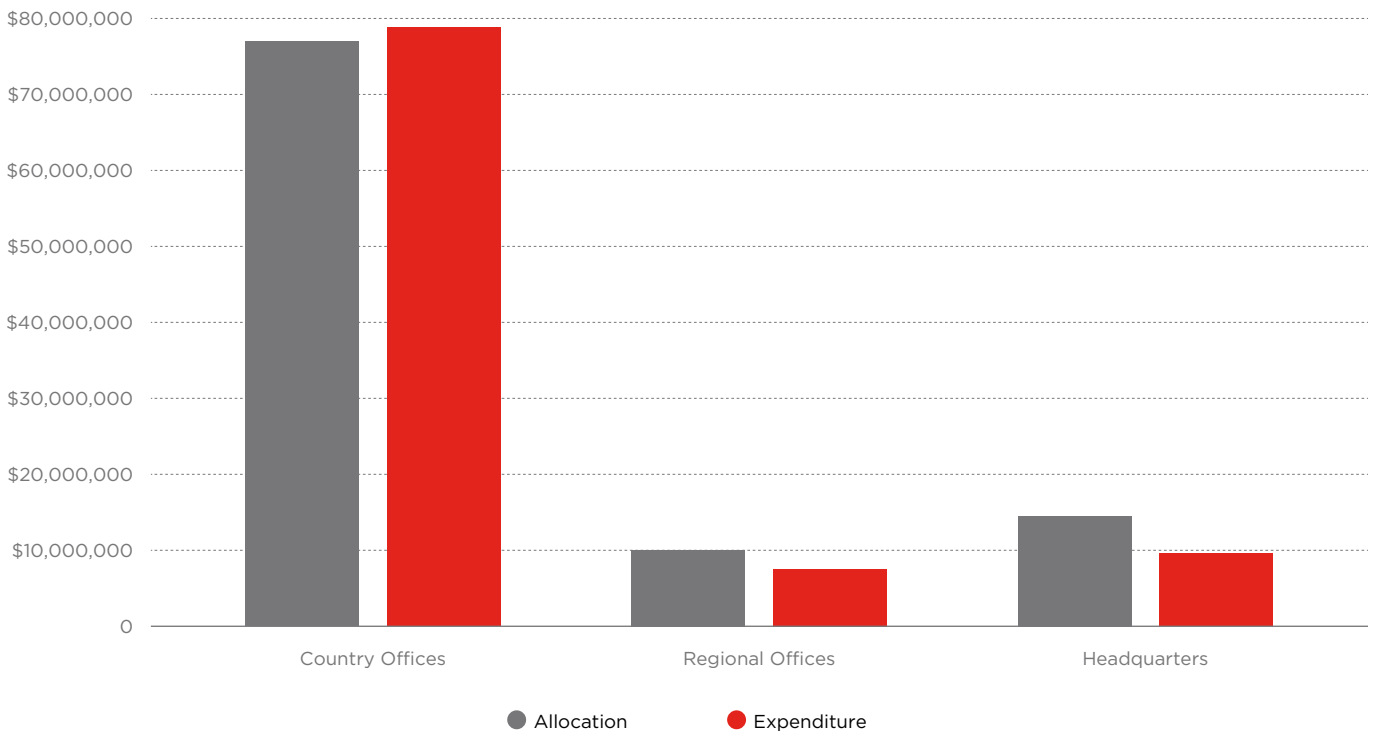| BUSINESS UNIT	PHASE II TOTAL			UNFPA			UNICEF		
	Allocation	Expenditure	Exp rate	Allocation	Expenditure	Exp rate	Allocation	Expenditure	Exp rate
Bangladesh	3,862,500	5,025,103	130%	1,562,500	1,402,936	90%	2,300,000	3,622,167	157%
Burkina Faso	2,043,750	2,188,744	107%	743,750	700,119	94%	1,300,000	1,488,625	115%
Ethiopia	3,412,500	4,132,643	121%	1,312,500	1,389,929	106%	2,100,000	2,742,714	131%
Ghana	2,083,750	2,021,345	97%	943,750	888,248	94%	1,140,000	1,133,097	99%
India	3,512,500	3,793,590	108%	1,312,500	1,651,560	126%	2,200,000	2,142,030	97%
Mozambique	1,393,750	2,013,883	144%	743,750	1,110,853	149%	650,000	903,030	139%
Nepal	1,743,750	2,316,263	133%	943,750	770,755	82%	800,000	1,545,507	193%
Niger	1,533,834	1,956,320	128%	743,750	811,451	109%	790,084	1,144,869	145%
Sierra Leone	1,723,750	2,394,835	139%	743,750	917,541	123%	980,000	1,477,294	151%
Uganda	1,923,750	1,929,463	100%	943,750	851,086	90%	980,000	1,078,377	110%
Yemen	1,037,500	1,254,233	121%	637,500	433,460	68%	400,000	820,773	205%
Zambia	1,663,750	1,233,243	74%	943,750	518,919	55%	720,000	714,324	99%
COUNTRY OFFICE SUBTOTAL	**25,935,084**	**30,259,663**	**117%**	**11,575,000**	**11,446,858**	**99%**	**14,360,084**	**18,812,805**	**131%**
Asia-Pacific regional office	723,750	1,105,451	153%	323,750	503,194	155%	400,000	602,257	151%
Middle East-North Africa regional office	873,750	923,417	106%	323,750	278,347	86%	550,000	645,070	117%
Eastern and Southern Africa regional office	908,750	1,060,041	117%	323,750	465,741	144%	585,000	594,300	102%
West and Central Africa regional office	873,750	1,096,256	125%	323,750	377,458	117%	550,000	718,798	131%
REGIONAL OFFICE SUBTOTAL	**3,380,000**	**4,185,166**	**124%**	**1,295,000**	**1,624,740**	**125%**	**2,085,000**	**2,560,426**	**123%**
Headquarters programme budget	**2,500,000**	**1,349,597**	**54%**	**1,500,000**	**844,775**	**56%**	**1,000,000**	**504,822**	**50%**
Child Monitoring Mechanism	750,000	135,517	18%	-	-	-	750,000	135,517	18%
Independent evaluation	200,000	324,993	162%	100,000	95,000	95%	100,000	229,993	230%
Global Programme Support Unit (HR)	1,979,513	1,335,355	67%	829,513	588,000	71%	1,150,000	747,355	65%
HEADQUARTER SUBTOTAL	**5,429,513**	**3,145,462**	**58%**	**2,429,513**	**1,527,775**	**63%**	**3,000,000**	**1,617,687**	**54%**
TOTAL (PROGRAMMABLE)	34,744,597	37,590,290	108%	15,299,513	14,599,373	95%	19,445,084	22,990,917	118%

4.7 Value for money

The Global Programme continued to improve its value-for-money performance in relation to programme economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity.

ECONOMY

- **99 per cent** of services procured through competitive contracts (target = 95 per cent)
- **60 per cent** of programme goods and services procured through long-term agreements (target = 48 per cent)
- **71 per cent** of programme partnership agreements signed with local NGOs (target = 57%)

The Global Programme has enhanced cost-effectiveness while preserving quality through the following measures:

- **Using existing systems**: The Global Programme has leveraged existing structures, such as school systems in India, to provide education to over 2.4 million adolescent girls.
- **Pooled procurement**: The Global Programme has harmonized intervention costs through careful procurement practices. This includes the joint implementation of child marriage and FGM interventions using the same partners in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Uganda. This approach allows for resource pooling at both human and financial levels, promoting significant savings.
- **Multi-country research**: The Global Programme has conducted research across multiple countries. For instance, a multi-country study on climate and child marriage was carried out in the Middle East and West Africa regions. This approach enables efficient use of funds and generates adaptable evidence at the country level.
- **Joint financing**: The Global Programme has promoted the joint financing of interventions with other programmes. For example, in Ethiopia, partners provide matching funds in

addition to technical support, contributing over 16 per cent of the total programme budget. This strategy enhances the financial sustainability of the Programme.

EFFICIENCY

- **59 per cent** of localities with joint programme action (target = 50%)
- **14 per cent** ratio of overhead costs to programme expenditure (target = 15%)
- **96 per cent** budget implementation rate (target = 95%)

The Global Programme has employed various strategies to enhance efficiency without compromising quality. These include:

- **Digital platforms**: The Global Programme has advocated for the use of digital platforms. For instance, it has implemented a digital referral pathway (e-RPW) for service providers and tablets equipped with interactive life skills training modules in Sierra Leone. These digital platforms have significantly increased the efficiency of service provision.
- **Leveraging flagship initiatives to advance Multisectoral Programming**: The Global Programme designs and implements multisectoral interventions in collaboration with other initiatives. For instance, it leverages

© UNICEF/UNI499548/Tesfaye

the UPSHIFT programme in Uganda to provide experiential learning and social entrepreneurship, ultimately leading to improved employability outcomes for girls. This strategy effectively utilizes flagship initiatives to enhance the scope and impact of the programme.

EFFECTIVENESS

- **57 per cent** of joint activities implemented with effective coordination between agencies (target = 50%)

- **99 per cent** of technical assistance (missions, workshops, calls) rated satisfactory by the country offices (target = 100%)

- **99 per cent** of technical assistance requests (missions, workshops, calls) fulfilled by Headquarters and Regional Office (target = 100%)

The Global Programme emphasizes a continuous improvement process to ensure it meets its objectives. Some of the strategies employed include:

- **Joint field visits with stakeholders and actors**: The Global Programme has strengthened national collaborative mechanisms. For instance, in Burkina Faso, key stakeholders

and actors participate in joint programmatic visits and missions. These joint efforts monitor and supervise implementation, provide opportunities to formulate strategic orientations, and offer partners the necessary technical support. This collaborative approach enhances the effectiveness of the Programme.

EQUITY

- **94 per cent** of direct programme localities with child marriage prevalence in the 50th percentile and above of the country average (target = 90%)

The Global Programme has adopted numerous strategies to promote equity:

- **Digital platforms**: The Global Programme has harnessed the power of digital platforms to reach out to remote communities, deliver crucial services, and enhance GBV reporting. For instance, in Ghana, digital platforms such as YMK and Boame App have been instrumental in achieving these objectives.
- **Resource utilization**: The Global Programme has effectively utilized resources to ensure inclusivity. A case in point is West Bengal, where the 'Duare Sarkar' scheme was leveraged to extend services to vulnerable groups, thereby ensuring that no one is left behind.

4.8 Child safeguarding

In 2023, the Global Programme reported no cases of physical, sexual or emotional abuse by staff and associated individuals. The Global Programme collaborated with the African Union and Child Help Line International to harmonize and expand child helpline systems, including the standardization of the 116-child help number code across countries in Africa. In Zambia, the Global Programme helped schools identify barriers to child-friendly learning environments and implement child safeguarding procedures. The Global Programme facilitated training for 42 teachers and officials on child safeguarding and helped 30 schools to apply these guidelines. These measures aim to eliminate child marriage by promoting a culture where children are encouraged to speak up about rights violations and by ensuring a safe school environment, thus combating factors that lead to girls dropping out of school, such as bullying.

© UNICEF/UNI536599/Prinsloo

REFERENCES

BRAC and UNFPA, Adolescent Empowerment at Scale: Successes and challenges of an evidence-based approach to young women's programming in Africa, 2023, www.unfpa.org/publications/adolescent-empowerment-scale-successes-and-challenges-evidence-based-approach-young

The Child Marriage Data Portal, https://childmarriagedata.org/

Equimundo, UNFPA, Spotlight Initiative, Boyhood and Child, Early, And Forced Marriages And Unions An Evidence Review, 2020, www.equimundo.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Equimundo_CEFMU_Report.pdf

ESCWA, Estimating the economic costs of child marriage in the Arab region, 2023, https://publications.unescwa.org/2023/eeccm/sdgs/pdf/en/2301255E-Estimating-Economic-Costs-Child-Marriage-Main-Web.pdf

Girls Not Brides, UNFPA, UNICEF, CRANK Research Spotlight: Addressing child marriage and supporting married girls in conflict- and crisis-affected settings, 2023, www.girlsnotbrides.org/documents/1993/CRANK_Spotlight_Child_marriage_in_conflict-_and_crisis-affected_settings_Vvnyfo1.pdf

Girls Not Brides, 'How civil society organisations can use gender-transformative collective action to address child marriage and advance girls' rights: A 7-step guide', 2023.

Indira, Fazilatun Nessa; Gisèle Ndaya Luseba; Ergogie Tesfaye; Pauline Kedem Tallen, 'Towards a world with no child marriage: four countries pledge action', *Lancet*, 31 January 2023. www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(23)00109-5/fulltext

Mediashotz, 'Life Interrupted: UN launches campaign to end girl child marriage', 2023.

Moritz Maus, UNICEF – Life, Interrupted, https://moritzmaus.com/unicef-life-interrupted

Rumble, Lauren; Suzanne Petroni; Ruth Graham Goulder, 'Early learnings from UNICEF's work to employ gender transformative approaches to advance adolescent girls' rights', *Child Protection and Practice*

Suiqiong Fan, Yue Qian, Alissa Koski, 'Child marriage in mainland China', *Studies in Family Planning*, Vol. 53, No. 1, March 2022, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/sifp.12185.

UNESCWA, UNFPA, UNICEF, Estimating the economic costs of child marriage in the Arab region, 2023, https://publications.unescwa.org/2023/eeccm/sdgs/pdf/en/2301255E-Estimating-Economic-Costs-Child-Marriage-Main-Web.pdf

UNFPA, A new copyright for the human body, Bodyright, https://www.unfpa.org/bodyright

UNFPA, Elevating Rights and Choices for All: Guidance Note for Applying a Human Rights Based Approach to Programming, 2020, unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/2020_HRBA_guidance.pdf

UNFPA, Motherhood in Childhood: The Untold Story, 2022, www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/MotherhoodInChildhood_report.pdf

UNFPA, *Interwoven Lives, Threads of Hope*, State of World Population Report 2024, https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/swp2024-english-240327-web.pdf

UNFPA East and Southern Africa, 'What is the SADC Model Law all About?', 2021, https://esaro.unfpa.org/en/publications/what-sadc-model-law-all-about#:~:text=The%20SADC%20Model%20Law%20provides,states%20to%20end%20child%20marriage

UNFPA and UNICEF, Addressing Child Marriage in Humanitarian Settings: Technical guide for staff and partners of the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage, 2021, www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Child-marriage-humanitarian-settings-technical-guide-2021-v2.pdf

UNFPA and UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage,Gender Transformative Accelerator Tool. Workshop Facilitation Guide, 2021, www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/GTA%20Tool%20Guide-2021-EN_0.pdf

UNFPA and UNICEF, Evolution in the Evidence Base on Child Marriage from 2000–2019, 2021, https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Child-marriage-evidence-report-2021.pdf

UNFPA and UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage, Gender Transformative Accelerator Tool. https://www.unicef.org/documents/gender-transformative-accelerator-tool

UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage, PHASE III Programme Document (2024–2030), 2023, www.unicef.org/media/145651/file/Programme%20document%20.pdf

UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage, Phase III Summary Narrative, 2023, https://www.unicef.org/media/143861/file/Phase-III-Summary.pdf tec

UNICEF, 10 million additional girls at risk of child marriage due to COVID-19, 2021, www.unicef.org/press-releases/10-million-additional-girls-risk-child-marriage-due-covid-19

UNICEF, Is an End to Child Marriage Within Reach? Latest trends and future prospects: May 2023 update, https://data.unicef.org/resources/is-an-end-to-child-marriage-within-reach/

UNICEF, Prospects for Children in the Polycrisis. A 2023 Global Outlook, 2023, https://www.unicef.org/innocenti/reports/prospects-children-polycrisis-2023-global-outlook

UNICEF, Review of technology-based interventions to address child marriage and female genital mutilation, 2023, www.unicef.org/documents/review-technology-based-interventions-address-child-marriage-and-female-genital

United Nations, Report of the UN Economist Network for the UN 75th Anniversary Shaping the Trends of Our Time, 2020, www.un.org/en/desa/unen/report

ANNEX 1: Global Programme results framework

Last updated 7 May 2024

Indicator		Means of verification	Periodicity		Baseline	Milestone 2020	Milestone 2021	Milestone 2022	Milestone 2023
IMPACT: Adolescent girls, including the most marginalized, in countries targeted by the Global Programme fully enjoy their childhood free from the risk of marriage; they experience healthier, safer, and more empowered life transitions, including making choices about their education, sexuality, relationships, marriage, and childbearing.									
5301	Proportion of women aged 20–24 years who were married or in a union before age 18	DHS; MICS; Household survey	3–5 years	**TARGET**	41.1%	37.3%	36.4%	35.3%	34.3%
				ACHIEVED		**41.5%**	**39.4%**	**29.4%**	**28.7%**
				Baseline time frame =CY2010-2021 Weighted average computed. N=12 countries with current survey data					
5302	Proportion of women aged 20–24 years who were married or in a union before age 15	DHS; MICS; Household survey	3–5 years	**TARGET**	11.9%	10.3%	10.1%	9.1%	8.8%
				ACHIEVED		**11.9%**	**11.0%**	**7.1%**	**7.1%**
				Baseline time frame =CY2010-2021 Weighted average computed. N=12 countries with current survey data					
INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME 1000: Adolescent girls at risk of and affected by child marriage are effectively making their own informed decisions and choices regarding marriage, education, sexual and reproductive health									
1001	Proportion of girls aged 15–24 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care	DHS; MICS; Household survey	2–3 years	**TARGET**	36.8%	39.2%	42.3%	45.4%	49.1%
				ACHIEVED		**38.9%**	**41.2%**	**41.2%**	**47.9%**
				Baseline time frame =CY2010-2021 Weighted average computed. N=10 countries with current survey data					
1002	Proportion of respondents who think that children should have the final say in deciding when to get married	DHS; MICS; Household survey	2–3 years	**TARGET**	32.3%	33.9%	39.1%	41.3%	47.4%
				ACHIEVED		**46.7%**	**40.9%**		**49.8%**
				Baseline time frame =CY2010-2021 Weighted average computed. N=10 countries with current survey data					
1003	Proportion of respondents who feel confident in their ability to choose not to marry their daughter off before they turn 18 despite the social pressure	DHS; MICS; Household survey	2–3 years	**TARGET**	55.0%	57.7%	60.3%	63.0%	66.0%
				ACHIEVED		**33.5%**	**66.4%**		**53.9%**
				Baseline time frame =CY2010-2021 Weighted average computed. N=6 countries with current survey data					
1004	Proportion of girls and boys aged 15–19 who consider a husband to be justified in hitting or beating his wife for at least one of the specified reasons, i.e., if his wife burns the food, argues with him, goes out without telling him, neglects the child	DHS; MICS; Household survey	2–3 years	**TARGET**	38.4%	31.7%	30.0%	28.3%	26.5%
				ACHIEVED		**37.7%**	**37.5%**	**37.5%**	**36.9%**
				Baseline time frame =CY2010-2021 Weighted average computed. N=12 countries with current survey data					
1005	Adolescent birth rate	DHS; MICS; Household survey	2–3 years	**TARGET**	92	92	91	90	88
				ACHIEVED		**90**	**90**	**90**	**36**
				Baseline time frame =CY2010-2021 Weighted average computed. N=12 countries with current survey data					

Immediate Outcome 1100: Enhanced knowledge, education and life skills, and attitudes of marginalized adolescent girls on matters such as their rights, relationships, sexual and reproductive health, and financial literacy, including in humanitarian contexts

1101	Proportion of girls (10–24) who have comprehensive sexual and reproductive health knowledge	Survey of girls	2–3 years	**TARGET**	35.7%	38.6%	39.1%	44.3%	47.3%
				ACHIEVED			**49.5%**	**53.5%**	**78.7%**
				Baseline time frame =CY2010-2021 Weighted average computed. N=5 countries with current survey data					

1102	Proportion of girls who express increased sense of self-efficacy; who feel confident in their ability to negotiate and delay early marriage; who feel comfortable speaking without fear	DHS; MICS; Household survey	3–5 years	**TARGET**	37.7%	36%	42.8%	46.5%	51.5%
				ACHIEVED			**53.6%**	**60.2%**	**65%**
				Baseline time frame =CY2010-2021 Weighted average computed. N=5 countries with current survey data					

1103	Proportion of adolescent girls of lower-secondary school age that are out of school	DHS; MICS; Household survey	3–5 years	**TARGET**	30.8%	22.5%	18.1%	19.6%	18.0%
				ACHIEVED			**32.0%**	**26.7%**	**9.7%**
				Baseline time frame =CY2010-2021 Weighted average computed. N=5 countries with current survey data					

Output 1110: Underserved/ marginalized adolescent girls (aged 10–19) who are at risk of child marriage or who are pregnant, married, divorced or widowed are engaged in gender-transformative life skills and CSE programmes that build their knowledge, skills, awareness of their rights, and connect them to services.

1111	Number of adolescent girls (aged 10–19) who actively participated in life skills or CSE interventions in programme areas	Programme records and relevant administrative data	Annual	**TARGET**	3,408,567	3,978,626	4,068,171	5,481,189	7,795,315
				ACHIEVED		**4,106,426**	**2,589,915**	**6,308,541**	**7,122,689**
				Baseline time frame =CY2019 N=12 countries					

Output 1120: Underserved/marginalized adolescent girls supported to enrol and remain in formal and non-formal education, including through the transition from primary to secondary school

1121	Number of girls (10–19) supported by the Programme to enrol and/ or remain in primary or secondary school	Programme records and relevant administrative data	Annual	**TARGET**	337,373	354,084	422,573	168,598	481,442
				ACHIEVED		**160,478**	**135,746**	**161,446**	**2,489,051**
				Baseline time frame =CY2019 N=11 countries					

Immediate Outcome 1200: Adolescent boys, families, traditional and religious leaders, community groups, and other influencers demonstrate more gender-equitable attitudes and support for girls' rights

1201	Proportion of respondents who believe that all/most individuals in their community are marrying children before 18	Household survey	2–3 years	**TARGET**	52.9%	45%	45%	37.5%	20.0%
				ACHIEVED			**23%**	**24.6%**	**42.9%**
				Baseline time frame =CY2010-2021 Weighted average computed. N=5 countries with current survey data					

1203	Proportion of respondents (community, traditional and religious leaders) who are willing to introduce sanctions if someone does not practise child marriage	Household survey	2–3 years	**TARGET**	tbd	tbd	tbd	50.0%	50%
				ACHIEVED				**48.8%**	**71.8%**
				Baseline time frame =CY2010-2021 Weighted average computed. N=7 countries with current survey data					

1204	Proportion of respondents who think that marrying their daughter/female household members before 18 is the best option	Household survey	2–3 years	**TARGET**	8.0%	7.0%	6.0&	5%	4%
				ACHIEVED			**13.0%**	**10.6%**	**17.1%**
				Baseline time frame =CY2010-2021 Weighted average computed. N=6 countries with current survey data					

Output 1210: Boys and men are engaged in gender-transformative programmes (including CSE for boys) that promote healthy relationships and positive masculinities and gender equality

1211	Number of boys and men actively participating in group education/ dialogues that address harmful masculinities and gender norms	Programme records	Annual	**TARGET**	341,201	399,287	1,233,427	1,207,175	5,305,013
				ACHIEVED		6,351,577	1,148,127	4,074,080	6,478,168
				Baseline time frame =CY2019 N=11 countries					

Output 1210: Boys and men are engaged in gender-transformative programmes (including CSE for boys) that promote healthy relationships and positive masculinities and gender equality

1221	Number of individuals (boys, girls, women and men) who participate in group education/ dialogue sessions on consequences of and alternatives to child marriage, the rights of adolescent girls, and gender equality	Programme records	Annual	**TARGET**	2,896,674	2,941,474	15,268,603	16,079,118	17,373,581
				ACHIEVED		20,431,081	15,997,882	16,127,351	14,128,820
				Baseline time frame =CY2019 N=12 countries					
1222	Number of individuals (boys, girls, women, and men) reached by mass media (traditional and social media) messaging on child marriage, the rights of adolescent girls, and gender equality	Programme records	Annual	**TARGET**	13,773,723	18,605,951	70,093,613	74,479,294	124,330,233
				ACHIEVED		52,786,666	55,097,021	155,760,623	135,380,547
				Baseline time frame =CY2019 N=12 countries					
1223	Number of local actors (e.g. traditional, religious and community leaders) with meaningful participation in dialogues and consensus-building to end child marriage	Programme records	Annual	**TARGET**	5,749	33,407	61,745	167,313	880,014
				ACHIEVED		193,255	163,177	825,677	1,611,020
				Baseline time frame =CY2019 N=12 countries					

Output 1230: Women's organizations and youth-led organizations are included and supported to mobilize the voices of the marginalized (particularly girls), challenge harmful social norms, and promote gender equality

1231	Number of CSOs newly mobilized in support of challenging social norms and promoting gender equality by the Global Programme	Programme records	Annual	**TARGET**	144	263	214	212	257
				ACHIEVED		79	122	173	808
				Baseline time frame =CY2019 N=12 countries					

Intermediate Outcome 2000: Relevant sectoral systems and institutions effectively respond to the needs of adolescent girls and their families in targeted Global Programme areas

2001	Proportion of girls and young women of reproductive age (aged 15–19 years) who have their family planning need met with a modern contraceptive method	DHS; MICS; Household survey	3–5 years	**TARGET**	40%	50%	54%	56%	60%
				ACHIEVED					32.4%
				Baseline time frame =CY2010-2021 Weighted average computed. N=12 countries with current survey data					
2002	Girls' transition rate from primary to lower-secondary school	DHS; MICS; Household survey	3–5 years	**TARGET**	74%	79%	78%	80%	81%
				ACHIEVED					69.7%
				Baseline time frame =CY2010-2021 Weighted average computed. N=8 countries with current survey data					

Immediate Outcome 2100: Increased capacity of education, health, child protection and GBV systems to deliver coordinated, quality programmes and services that meet the needs of adolescent girls and their families, including in humanitarian contexts.

2101	Proportion of adolescent girls of lower-secondary school age who stayed away from school during the past month and past 12 months because they felt unsafe at, or on the way to/from school or online	Education management information data	2–3 years	**TARGET**	82%	81%	80%	79%	78%
				ACHIEVED			36%	25%	39.2%
				Baseline time frame =CY2010-2021 Weighted average computed. N=5 countries with current survey data					

2102	Number of girls and boys in Programme areas who accessed prevention and protection services	Programme records, survey of girls	2–3 years	**TARGET**	500,660	352,328	459,955	612,148	1,161,312
				ACHIEVED			243,136	652,206	2,097,528
				Baseline time frame =CY2010-2021 Weighted average computed. N=5 countries with current survey data					

Output 2120: Formal (primary and secondary) and non-formal schools supported to provide quality, gender-responsive education for adolescent girls, including comprehensive sexuality education.

2121	Number of primary/ secondary/ non-formal schools in programme areas providing quality gender-friendly education that meets minimum standards	Programme records	Annual	**TARGET**	1,698	626	882	1,118	2,828
				ACHIEVED		1,081	865	2,702	2,402
				Baseline time frame =CY2019 N=9 countries					

Output 2130: Health (including sexual and reproductive health), GBV and child protection systems supported to implement guidelines, protocols and standards for adolescent-friendly and gender-responsive coordinated, quality services for unmarried, married, divorced and widowed adolescent girls, adolescent girls who are pregnant or already have children.

2131	Number of service delivery points in programme areas providing quality adolescent-responsive services (health, child protection/GBV) that meet minimum standards	Programme records	Annual	**TARGET**	3,299	1,879	5,046	5,430	7,452
				ACHIEVED		1,144	6,067	7.848	5,518
				Baseline time frame =CY2019 N=10 countries					

Immediate Outcome 2200: Increased capacity of national and subnational social protection, poverty reduction and economic empowerment programmes and services to respond to the needs of the poorest adolescent girls and their families, including in humanitarian contexts

2201	Number of girls (10–19) benefiting from social protection, poverty reduction and economic empowerment programmes	Programme records	Annual	**TARGET**	902,800	2,919,961	4,938,640	6,956,132	9,577,524
				ACHIEVED			913,077	6,332,780	6,312,689
				Baseline timeframe =CY2010-2021 Weighted average computed. N=8 countries with current survey data					

Output 2210: Partnerships with governments, civil society organizations and other implementers supported to ensure that social protection, poverty reduction, and economic empowerment programmes and services are adolescent-friendly, gender-responsive and reaching the poorest adolescent girls and their families.

2211	Number of partnerships (both formal and informal) established to deliver adolescent-responsive social protection, poverty reduction and economic empowerment programmes and services	Programme records	Annual	**TARGET**	31	36	59	131	585
				ACHIEVED		48	61	452	906
				Baseline time frame =CY2019 N=9 countries					

Intermediate Outcome 3000: Enhanced legal and political response to prevent child marriage and to support pregnant, married, divorced or widowed adolescent girls

3001	Proportion of complaints on child marriage decided by justice (and informal justice) systems.	Programme records, survey of girls	Annual	**TARGET**	30%	33%	35%	36%	38%
				ACHIEVED					30%
				Baseline timeframe =CY2010-2021 Weighted average computed. N=9 countries with current survey data					

Immediate Outcome 3100: Enhanced capacity of governments to fund, coordinate and implement national, and sub-national action plans and systems to end child marriage

3101	Policy effort index, as measured by the strength of the child marriage national action plan on six dimensions (political support, policies, governance, human rights, accountability, access and participation, and evaluation)	Policy assessment checklist	Annual	**TARGET**		65%	65%	65%	65%
				ACHIEVED				62%	76%
				Baseline timeframe =CY2010-2021 Weighted average computed. N=11 countries with current survey data					

3102	Expenditure on subnational action plan as a percentage of the subnational expenditure in programme areas.	Budget reviews, Expenditure tracking surveys	Annual	**TARGET**	20%	34%	38%	42%	45%
				ACHIEVED			**10%**	**10%**	**23%**
				Baseline timeframe =CY2010-2021 Weighted average computed. N=6 countries with current survey data					

Output 3110: Capacity-building and technical support provided to government to enact, enforce and uphold laws and policies, in line with international human rights standards, aimed at preventing child marriage, protecting those at risk and addressing the needs of those affected

3111	Number of policies or legal instruments addressing child marriage drafted, proposed, or adopted at national and subnational level with Global Programme support.	Annual reviews of policies and laws	Annual	**TARGET**	34	57	62	99	108
				ACHIEVED	Cumulative 10	**72**	**94**	**118**	
				Baseline time frame =CY2019 N=9 countries					

Output 3120: Capacity-building and technical support provided to government to implement a budgeted multi-sectoral gender-transformative plan on ending child marriage across ministries and departments at subnational levels.

3121	Number of subnational plans with evidence-informed interventions to address child marriage	Subnational policy document reviews	Annual	**TARGET**	59	82	126	137	153
				ACHIEVED		**52**	**57**	**143**	**235**
				Baseline time frame =CY2019 N=10 countries					

Immediate Outcome 3200: Increased capacity of governments and non-government organizations, to generate, disseminate and use quality and timely evidence to inform policy and programme design, track progress and document lessons

3201	Number of evidence and knowledge addressing child marriage which have been used in policy decisions, programme design and advocacy	Programme records and policy documents	Annual	**TARGET**	20	40	34	70	90
				ACHIEVED	Cumulative 18	**29**	**51**		
				Baseline timeframe =CY2010-2021 Weighted average computed. N=8 countries with current survey data					

Output 3210: Capacity-building and technical support provided to government and civil society organizations to generate and use quality data and evidence on what works to end child marriage and support married girls

3211	Number of generated evidence and knowledge that focus on what works to end child marriage	Programme records	Annual	**TARGET**	19	38	37	73	94
				ACHIEVED	Cumulative 17	**34**	**63**	**83**	
				Baseline time frame =CY2019 N=11 countries					

3212	Number of generated evidence and knowledge that apply a gender analysis	Programme records	Annual	**TARGET**	11	32	40	72	92
				ACHIEVED	Cumulative 18	**34**	**64**	**87**	
				Baseline time frame =CY2019 N=7 countries					

Output 3220: Regional and global coordination and support provided to facilitate South-To-South collaboration and cross-learning across GP countries and with initiatives in other countries.

3221	Number of South-To-South cooperation (conference, expert visits, peer consultation, study tours, communities of practice) supported	Programme records	Annual	**TARGET**	5	11	13	13	23
				ACHIEVED		**4**	**3**	**28**	**52**
				Baseline time frame =CY2019 N=11 countries					

Enabler 4100: Efficient and effective management of partnerships and resources enables achievement of results

4101	Proportion of programme goods and services procured through long-term agreements (LTAs)	Programme records	Annual	TARGET	2	5	% 39%	39%	45%	40%
				ACHIEVED			32%	42%	67%	60%
				Weighted average computed. N=12 countries with current survey data						

4102	Proportion of programme partnership agreements signed with local NGOs	Programme records	Annual	**TARGET**	54%	72%	67%	58%	57%
				ACHIEVED		**74%**	**59%**	**59%**	**71%**
				Weighted average computed. N=12 countries with current survey data					
4103	Ratio of overhead costs to programme expenditure	Programme records	Annual	**TARGET**	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
				ACHIEVED		**13.8%**	**11%**	**15%**	**14%**
				Weighted average computed. N=12 countries with current survey data					
4104	Budget implementation rate	Programme records	Annual	**TARGET**	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
				ACHIEVED		**86%**	**107%**	**87%**	**96%**
				Weighted average computed. N=12 countries with current survey data					
4105	Proportion of joint activities implemented with effective coordination between agencies	Programme records	Annual	**TARGET**		20%	28%	50%	59%
				ACHIEVED		**40%**	**38%**	**53%**	**57%**
				Weighted average computed. N=12 countries with current survey data					
4106	Proportion of localities with joint programme action	Programme records	Annual	**TARGET**	35%	41%	42%	49%	50%
				ACHIEVED		**9%**	**41%**	**48%**	**59%**
				Weighted average computed. N=12 countries with current survey data					
4107	Proportion of direct programme localities with child marriage prevalence in the 50th percentile and above of the country average	Programme records	Annual	**TARGET**	84%	91%	92%	98%	92%
				ACHIEVED		**100%**	**97%**	**99%**	**87%**
				Weighted average computed. N=12 countries with current survey data					

Enabler 4200: Country offices and implementing partners have strengthened capacities to support implementation of interventions to end child marriage

4201	Proportion of technical assistance (missions, workshops, calls) rated as satisfactory by the country offices	Programme records	Annual	**TARGET**		100%	100%	100%	100%
				ACHIEVED		**100%**	**81%**	**98%**	**99%**
				Weighted average computed. N=12 countries with current survey data					
4202	Proportion of technical assistance requests (missions, workshops, calls) fulfilled by Headquarters and Region Office	Programme records	Annual	**TARGET**		100%	100%	100%	100%
				ACHIEVED		**100%**	**100%**	**98%**	**99%**
				Weighted average computed. N=12 countries with current survey data					

Enabler 4300: Programme mobilizes resources in support of child marriage interventions

4301	New revenue (in USD), mobilized broken down by:	Programme records	Annual	**TARGET**	3,793,626.71	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	500,000
				ACHIEVED		**5,992,581.5**	**25,770,642.66**	**22,078,441**	**12,200**

ANNEX 2: Risk matrix for the Global Programme

Risk	Probability	Impact	Mitigation	
National contextual risks				
1. Political will of Member States, including commitment to legal and legislative change and financial investments, is lacking, thereby hampering positive change.	Low	Medium	The Global Programme has strategically selected countries where some amount of momentum exists to end child marriage. Strong working relationships with the authorities and national ministries exist and will be maintained to build a sense of common purpose and enhance national ownership of the process. The Global Programme will amplify civil society voices, including alliances and external funds, which tend to enhance government accountability (e.g., joint advocacy efforts through civil society organization networks such as Girls Not Brides). The Global Programme will also continue to: 1) work with regional economic communities such as the African Union (AU), the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for enhanced 'influence' at country level and 2) engage with regional and national government entities through mechanisms such as the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and the United Nations General Assembly for high-level advocacy.	Risk rating: Low 1. Joint UNFPA-UNICEF advocacy and support strengthens country strategies for implementation and budgeting of National Action Plans for ending child marriage. 2. Lessons learned from countries that have integrated plans into national budgets and guidance shared with countries in the Global Programme and beyond. 3. Continued engagement with regional economic communities such as the African Union (AU), the League of Arab States, the South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children, the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) through mechanisms such as the African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage for enhanced 'influence' at country level. 4. Continued engagement with regional and national government entities through mechanisms such as the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, and the United Nations General Assembly for high-level advocacy. 5. Joint advocacy through civil society organization networks such as Girls Not Brides (activated at global level and implemented at country level) and the Aliadas Coalition to hold governments accountable.
2. Changes in the political context in countries, such as changes in leadership and shifts in national priorities (away from ending child marriage) or other security situations affect continuation and sustainability of ongoing positive change processes.	Low to Medium	Medium	Country programmes are designed to implement strategic plans, in consultation with national governments and in alignment with national priorities. Both UNFPA and UNICEF have long-standing relationships with the legislative and executive arms of Member States which permits a high degree of continuity in work, with slight changes in direction as needed to align with any new priorities. The multisectoral nature of the Global Programme permits continuity and sustainability of action through the most promising lead ministries in any given context. Country commitments enshrined in international declarations and conventions are also utilized as the basis for sustaining action. The Global Programme will continue its engagement with regional economic communities such as the African Union, SADC and ECOWAS for enhanced 'influence' at country level. Further, the Global Programme	Risk rating: Low 1. UNFPA and UNICEF continuously monitor the emergency situations and adapt programming in the Global Programme countries.

			will implement evidence-informed advocacy with targeted sectors in all Global Programme countries except Yemen. When strategic direction, performance management and delivery on results can no longer proceed as envisioned, agencies undertake a programme criticality exercise that scales back programming to the achievable minimum. To the extent possible, programme activities in unaffected regions will continue. Programme managers and leadership at the regional and headquarters levels will closely monitor the situation and implementation rate so that decisions can be made swiftly. Technical support will be increased to help countries redefine their deliverables and re-programme funds as needed to still meet the objectives of the Programme. Funds will be reallocated to other programme countries if needed in consultation with the Steering Committee.	
3. Humanitarian crises (e.g., virus outbreaks, natural disasters, conflicts, polycrisis) hamper or completely restrict implementation.	Medium	High	Headquarters, regional and country offices of both UNFPA and UNICEF prioritize preparedness, and temporarily shift to emergency response in affected regions and countries – which tends to usually include children and adolescents at risk of or affected by child marriage. In consultation with the Global Programme Steering Committee, to the extent possible, programme activities will continue, and ending child marriage activities will be revisited to take into consideration the restrictions and protection measures (both individual and collective). UNFPA and UNICEF continuously monitor the emergency situation in the Global Programme countries (e.g., through sitreps). One potential solution is to increase investment in social protection programmes, such as cash transfers and food assistance, which can help alleviate the immediate economic impacts on families. These programmes can also help to build resilience and reduce vulnerabilities. The establishment of learning recovery programmes will help tackle the learning losses and prevent children from falling further behind. Ultimately, a coordinated and collective effort is needed to protect the rights and well-being of children and adolescents. This includes not only providing immediate assistance but also addressing the underlying causes of the polycrisis and building resilience for the future. This cannot be achieved without a more coordinated and collective effort from international organizations and governments to help mitigate the effects of the polycrisis and protect children's futures.	Risk rating: Low 1. UNFPA and UNICEF continuously monitor the emergency situations and adapt programming in the Global Programme countries.
Coordination, capacity & delivery risks				
4. Inadequate coordination between UNFPA and UNICEF.	Low	Medium	The Global Programme works within a formalized programme structure that both facilitates and mandates various coordination systems including through the Administrative Agent function and the Steering Committee. The Global Programme enhances coordination between UNFPA and UNICEF through one Global Programme Coordinator, joint communication and joint projects in similar geographic areas.	Risk rating: Low 1. Governance structure of the Global Programme (such as the Steering Committee and the Partner Advisory Group) provides a forum for coordination between development partners, civil society organizations and governments. 2. Active engagement in networks such as Girls Not Brides, including participation in their annual global meeting. Active engagement and support for the implementation of the Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls.

5. Inadequate coordination between development partners working on ending child marriage results in duplication of efforts.	Low to Medium	Medium	Working jointly with multiple donors through the Global Programme is already demonstrably mitigating this risk. In addition, Phase III will ensure programmatic resources are complementary to each other and reach areas of greatest need. At country level, UNFPA and UNICEF are coordinating with governments to ensure that their ending child marriage strategy is aligned with national priorities, and supporting a unification of civil society efforts, in order to avoid duplication. Further, the governance structure of the Global Programme (such as the Steering Committee and the Partner Advisory Group) provides a forum for coordination between development partners, civil society organizations and governments. Active participation of the Global Programme in networks such as Girls Not Brides and through engagement and support for the implementation of the Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls help to mitigate duplication risks. The Child Marriage Research to Action Network (CRANK), established in partnership with Girls Not Brides, strengthens knowledge-sharing and capacity of partners, including connecting African researchers and practitioners to global dialogue.	Risk rating: Low Enhanced coordination between UNFPA and UNICEF through one Global Programme Coordinator, joint communication, and joint projects/implementation in similar geographic areas.
6. Inadequate capacity of government partners, civil society or UNFPA/UNICEF staff lowers effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, etc.	Medium	Medium	Capacity tends to vary across countries and financial support dedicated to boosting capacity will be adjusted accordingly. Technical support across the Programme (from headquarters, and regional offices, between countries, and from external technical partners) will also be allocated as per capacity and needs. Where needed, external consultants and partners will be brought on board to bridge the capacity gaps. UNFPA and UNICEF will undertake continuous programmatic assessments to ascertain suitability of implementing partners to ensure they are working with the best partners who are suitably positioned to achieve results and have the mandate and competitive advantage on the ground. Other mitigation efforts include: 1. The Office of Evaluation conducts a self-assessment to strengthen accountability by providing the Global Programme with timely evidence on the status of implementation of adapted strategies during a crisis, such as COVID-19. 2. Global Programme Support Unit (GPSU) and regional offices focus on provision of technical support to enhance country capacity through sharing information, tools and technical guidelines on knowledge management platforms; webinars; communities of practice (e.g., UNICEF yammer); emails; monthly newsletter; country visits; annual consultations; and engagement of consultants. 3. Country offices provide support and training of implementing partners on financial management, implementation of the harmonized approach to cash transfers (HACT) and reporting. 4. Country offices facilitate quarterly and annual reviews of implementation including monitoring of budget and South-South exchanges.	Risk Rating: Medium 1. GPSU and regional offices focus on provision of technical support to enhance country capacity through sharing information on knowledge management platforms; webinars; communities of practice (e.g., CRANK); emails; monthly newsletter; country visits; annual consultations; and engagement of consultants. 2. Country offices provide support and training of implementing partners on financial management, implementation of the harmonized approach to cash transfers (HACT) and reporting. 3. Country offices facilitate quarterly and annual reviews of implementation including monitoring of budget and South-South exchanges.

7. The Programme does not reach the most at-risk/vulnerable girls and women.	Low to Medium	Low	In designing the Global Programme, UNICEF applied a Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES) approach, to deliver equity-focused planning, programming and monitoring. This tool supports monitoring programmes and policies to ensure that an equity approach to reach the most marginalized children is evidence-based and in support of planned impact. UNFPA uses population data to conduct age, gender, and geographically disaggregated analysis to estimate prevalence and burden of child marriage. At the core of both these approaches is the identification and targeting of the most vulnerable, holding service providers accountable and creating better access for the most disadvantaged communities including girls at risk of and affected by child marriage.	Risk Rating: Low 1. Strategic focus of the Programme continues to aim to reach for the most vulnerable girls through MoRES and population data analysis. 2. Tools rolled out to support programming that targets most at-risk/vulnerable girls. These include: The child marriage data portal that highlights regions with high child marriage prevalence, including hard-to-reach areas; SBC Toolkit to address Disability Stigma and Discrimination; Technical note on Leaving No One Behind

8. Risk of cultural sensitivity of the topic, or of conservative backlash from within the communities.	Low	Low to Medium	Agencies are implementing in a culturally sensitive manner at the country level. It is crucial that the Global Programme is not perceived as imparting a particular agenda or ideological framework that is not in the best interests of the community. Hence, careful consideration will be given to how issues are conceptualized and framed in any given country and subnational context with adherence to basic do-no-harm guidelines. Community leaders, parents and guardians will be involved from the start as per ethics protocols and cultural considerations. UNFPA and UNICEF have strong backgrounds in community-level work and are already successfully managing programmes to end child marriage in many countries, demonstrating that it is indeed possible to avoid any reputational risks to the agencies or development partners.	Risk Rating: Low
				
				1. Agencies are implementing in a culturally sensitive manner at country level.
				2. GPSU has supported the roll-out of tools to ensure the Programme is implemented in a culturally sensitive manner at the country level. These tools include:
				  a. The Co-creation Playbook developed to ensure a people-centred approach to ending harmful practices. The Playbook adopts a 'listen first' approach whereby communities determine their own priorities and solutions, using their own language and preferred approaches, thus minimizing the risk of backlash.
				  b. The Gender-transformative accelerator tool that facilitates programmatic reflection and action planning at local and community level.
				  c. The Social and community listening methods that have been incorporated in the Programme to quickly scan discourse for and against child marriage and address them appropriately.

9. Pushback against gender equality: women and girls experience resistance and obstacles against gender equality at all levels of the socio-ecological model. The pushback against gender equality risks undermining the hard-won gains in gender equality.	High	Medium	Forming alliances with organizations, donors and governments that support gender equality is a key strategy for mitigation. This includes coordination and harmonization of strategies and understanding and unpacking the concerted efforts of those who undermine gender equality. Promoting gender equality across the socio-ecological model allows the Global Programme to target areas where progress can be achieved. This may be girls' education, access to ASRH services, social protection or vocational training in contexts where legislative change on the age of child marriage has stalled, or where deeply entrenched discriminatory gender norms are slow to change at the community level. Responding flexibly to openings for gender equality that emerge allows the Global Programme to seize opportunities.	Risk Rating: Medium 1. Agencies are implementing in a culturally sensitive manner at country level.

10. Risk of human rights violations by government partners, civil society or UNFPA/UNICEF staff either directly, or through action (or omissions) or through business relationships or supply chain.	Low	Medium	The Global Programme works within the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. The Global Programme uses the human rights-based approach to child marriage programming at regional, national and global level. Additionally: UNICEF is implementing the procedures for a child safeguarding framework in all countries. The framework is supported by the 2016 Child Safeguarding Policy. 1. UNICEF is implementing the framework for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) in all countries that covers some issues that the Child Safeguarding framework is not covering. 2. Consistent with the UNDG's guidelines for common country assessment and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (previously UNDAF), all UNFPA and UNICEF country offices undertake independent, impartial and collective assessment and analysis of a country situation to examine progress, gaps, opportunities and bottlenecks with regard to human rights principles (equality and non-discrimination, participation, accountability) to guide planning and implementation of UN development activities.	Risk Rating: Low 1. UNICEF has a child safeguarding toolkit with a self-assessment tool that helps identify the partner's strengths and weaknesses in child safeguarding. 2. UNICEF conducts follow-up assessments when new engagement opportunities are launched with existing partners to evaluate the potential for new safeguarding risks and come up with ways to mitigate those risks. All civil society organizations with partnership and cooperation agreements with UNICEF on the Global Programme interventions have a completed and verified PSEA self-assessment. 3. UNFPA's implementing partners have all been assessed to date on their prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PSEAH) capacities. This is part of an overall strategy with pillars on (1) effective prevention of SEAH by personnel and partners; (2) timely, structured and survivor/victim-centred response to every incident; (3) high-quality support and assistance to victims of SEAH; and (4) all measures embedded in a robust institutional safeguarding framework.
11. Slow decline on child marriage: the decline in child marriage is much too slow to achieve the SDG target 5.3 of ending child marriage by 2030	High	Medium	Building on the existing evidence of what works to end child marriage, the Global Programme is concentrating resources on strategies that have the highest chances of achieving the greatest impact on the well-being and empowerment of adolescent girls. This also means reducing resources and support for interventions that have not shown sufficiently rapid progress in the decline of child marriage.	Risk Rating: Medium 1. The GPSU has identified 17 countries, referred to as 'Rising stars', with high prevalence rates but with an enabling environment conducive to accelerating progress towards ending child marriage. The GPSU is positioning for funding and technical support
Financial & fiduciary risks				
1. The Global Programme does not attract enough funding to deliver results at scale due to changes in partner priorities or other reasons.	Medium	Medium to High	The option of working jointly with other donors through the Global Programme will go a long way to mitigate this risk. In addition, Phase III will ensure programmatic resources are complementary and reach areas of greatest need. Strategic relationships with donors fostered through regular meetings to review country situations and programme progress help to mitigate this risk. Relationships with UNFPA and UNICEF National Committees sustained through visits, teleconferences and regular country updates also help to mitigate this risk. Further, Phase III of the Global Programme Phase III includes an in-depth and dynamic communications strategy which includes an advocacy calendar to enhance visibility of the Global Programme as well as a resource mobilization strategy (led by the GPSU) to identify and meet partners to raise resources.	Risk Rating: Medium 1. GPSU is implementing a resource mobilization strategy, actively identifying and meeting partners to raise resources. 2. GPSU is implementing a communication and visibility strategy, including an advocacy calendar to enhance visibility of the Global Programme. 3. Strategic relationships with donors fostered through regular meetings to review country situations and programme progress. 4. Relationships with UNFPA and UNICEF National Committees sustained through visits, virtual conferences, and regular country updates.

3. Risk that funds are not used for the intended purposes; do not achieve value for money; and/or are not properly accounted for.	Medium	Medium to High	UNFPA and UNICEF policies on fraud and procurement are publicly available and strictly applied. Within the Global Programme framework, the Steering Committee is the highest body for strategic guidance, fiduciary and management oversight and coordination. The Administrative Agent is accountable for effective and impartial fiduciary management. Outside the direct Global Programme framework is the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) Fiduciary Management Oversight Group, which serves as the first point of contact in headquarters for fiduciary matters. It oversees the implementation of the fiduciary aspects of the UNDG policies on joint funding mechanisms and discusses any required departures from the standard Memorandum of Understanding, Letters of Agreements and Steering Committee Terms of Reference. UNICEF has developed a detailed anti-fraud strategy addressing fraud at all levels and has designated the Deputy Representative, Operations and Regional Chiefs of Operations as focal points at the country and regional offices, respectively. Fraud risk management efforts are ongoing, including reporting cases as and when they are brought to light. As part of these efforts and to enhance awareness, staff have been trained on the anti-fraud strategy in addition to the online mandatory fraud awareness training. Similar online training was also developed through the United Nations inter-agency collaboration and translated into various key languages. Programme countries continuously apply assurance activities through external audit firms to support undertaking of spot checks, audits and micro-assessments. UNFPA and UNICEF anti-fraud and whistle-blower protection policies shared with partners, consultants and contractors as appropriate. Every allegation of fraud is fully investigated, and if substantiated, the donor is informed, efforts put in motion for loss recovery, and any implicated implementing partner barred from future engagement with UNICEF. These efforts, including the rigorous risk management through HACT processes, enhance fraud awareness in UNICEF-funded projects and are expected to reduce incidents of fraudulent activities through prevention, deterrence and detection. The rigorous anti-fraud measures mentioned above target all fraud cases reported in all projects. UNICEF reports annually to the Executive Board on all fraud and corruption cases; The full 2020 report can be found at: 2021-ABL3-OIAI_annual_report-EN-ODS.pdf (unicef.org). UNICEF has a whistle-blower protection policy which is internal and not publicly available. UNICEF's Ethics Office, responsible for administering the policy, and UNICEF's Office of Internal Audit and Investigations, responsible for investigating complaints of retaliation, both publicly to UNICEF's Executive Board. The policy and contact details of the Ethics Office are prominently posted in several locations on UNICEF's intranet, and the Ethics Office regularly engages in outreach. UNFPA and UNICEF also explore alternative solutions to direct cash transfer to partners to avoid fraud or misuse to the extent possible.	Risk Rating: Low 1. Programme countries continuously apply assurance activities through audit firms to support undertaking of spot checks, audits, and micro-assessments. 2. Exploring alternative solutions to direct cash transfer to partners to avoid fraud or misuse to the extent possible. 3. UNFPA and UNICEF anti-fraud and whistle-blower protection policies shared with partners, consultants and contractors as appropriate.

2023 ANNUAL RESULTS AND PHASE II (2020-2023) REPORT

Amplifying Change: Harnessing Collective Power to End Child Marriage

UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage

end child marriage

A voice. A chance. A future.